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THE MAN IN THE PULPIT

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THE
MAN IN THE PULPIT

BY
JAMES DOUGLAS

AND PULPIT, DRUM ECCLESIASTICK
WAS BEAT WITH FIST INSTEAD OF A STICK
BUTLER

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TO MY FATHER

*These impressions of Preachers appeared in the MORNING
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with the kind permission of the Editor.*

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THE MAN IN THE PULPIT

I

THE LATE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

AS I cross Westminster Bridge this November Sunday afternoon a shuttle of bright sound is flung across the sombre imperturbable Thames into the fragile Parliament that tosses up its fantastic mists on the points of its innumerable spears. A loom of bells! To and fro the shimmering threads of music dart until the romantic air is hung with warp and woof of changing and chiming melody.

The merry gnomes of smoke throw fairy chaplets from the sky, enwreathing sad roof and chimney with fading magic and perishable glamour and melting wonder. Master masons these, out of the breath of London building castles and palaces and cathedrals whose walls and towers and spires are ruined ere they rise, visionary architecture of dreams.

Under the rainbow of song woven by the distant loom of bells, I hasten towards the dim square brows of Lambeth Palace, grim with history, haunted by the great ghosts of Laud and Pole, Wyclif and Cranmer,

Charles and Elizabeth, heavy with remembrance of Plantagenet and Tudor, Stuart and Guelph. Here the present recoils from the predominant past so violently that one feels alien and unwelcome.

What are the folk watching? Is it Essex on his last journey to the Tower? Is it Elizabeth? Is it a Cromwellian colonel? I hurry round the corner. A little procession is issuing from the Palace, but these men bearing white wands are clad in twentieth century ugliness, and the horror of dull cutaway coats and formless trousers shatters the fantasy.

But the solemn gait of surpliced curates helps one to gather up the fragments, and when the Archbishop appears, they re-unite—for a second. For a second only, for this Archbishop carries, not a crozier, but an umbrella. A badly-rolled umbrella withal, which he pounds on the flagstones as he shuffles into the parish church.

So this is the Rugby boy's "Just Beast." By his side ambles his antithesis, the Parish Vicar. Most meek and mild, apologetic hair slinking timorously round the nape of his neck, demure and deprecating and prim, he visibly shrinks and shrivels away from his dangerous companion, who, with bristling black mane, fierce whiskers, and wrathfully shut mouth, looks like an old lion out for a promenade with a venerable sheep.

The Old Lion stumbles at the steps. A vigilant curate rashly puts forth a guiding hand. The Old Lion does not bite it off, but he growls. Beware, O curate! But the foolish curate persists, mayhap with visions of preferment behind his solicitude. He backs delicately, offers his arm to the Old Lion. The Old Lion roars, and placing his hand on the officious back irritably thrusts the unhappy youth forward, while the

ubiquitous policeman in the background grins. And so into the parish church.

The Old Lion having caged himself somewhere in the chancel, the terrified curates and the timid vicar regain something as like calm as is possible, but there are wary looks towards the "Just Beast," and the Lambeth Brotherhood in the pews seem to be waiting for something to happen.

I like the Lambeth Brotherhood. They are nearly all working men. They were singing, "Onward, Christian Soldiers," as the Archbishop umbrellaed his way up the aisle, singing, too without a choir, in rough, hearty tones that made honest discord with the dulcet organ. Old men with Tolstoy beards, young men, middle-aged men, but no women. They chant the responses heartily, sing the anthems lustily, and fill the church with a rough earnestness almost demonstrative in its sincerity. Even Cromwell might have approved of this stern Lambeth Brotherhood.

As we sing the hymn before the sermon the Austenian vicar minces coyly across the church and confers with the pushed curate. Will the curate lead the Old Lion to the pulpit? That is evidently the problem. After long debate, vicar and curate march sedately to the cage and await the egress of its inmate. The Brotherhood fixes its eyes on the little drama of temperaments.

The Old Lion disdains aid, and with slow steps advances to the pulpit, flanked by his solicitous attendants. Up the crooked stairs he stumbles, and stands erect behind the cushion ecclesiastic. All symptoms of age vanish—the grim, rough face is set firm as adamant, solid as the Lollard Tower, immovable as the Landseer Lion in Trafalgar Square.

My first impression is a Gladstonian reminiscence.

The Grand Old Archbishop has something of the leonine forthrightness of the Grand Old Man—a certain largeness of glance, a certain ordered fury of resolution, a certain detachment of pose, as of an iron soul that despises things mean and small. Withal a noble air of selfhood, isolation, unconscious mastery. Surely this is the archiepiscopal Overman!

The features are hewn out of granite, not by delicate chisel but by tremendous axe. The wrinkles are chasms. On either side of the jutting nose the cheeks are cleft down to the corners of the clenched hard lips with a fierce indentation. After these deep ravines had been cut, Time must have paused to survey his work. Then, to complete it, he swung his axe again, striking at the corners of the mouth and driving the ravines down to the sheer edge of the jaw, until the chin stood alone like a jammed rock held fast by its parent cliff.

A black-avised man. Black of hair, black of eye, black of mien. In fit times a proper soldier-priest, wielder of sword as well as Word. He would look no whit fiercer with iron harness on his back. His smile is half a frown; his frown is half a smile. Warrior eyes as of an old eagle, gaunt cheek-bones, and all over the face a saturnine light of humour.

Hirsute. No Jacob, but an Esau. Never was hair so idiosyncratic, so bristlingly alive with character. Each horrent eyebrow shouts defiance like a portcullis, and round the eyes are trenches of battle. The black outburst of side-whisker joins the black chaos of tumbled mane in a wild war-dance of hair which time has hardly touched with white or grey.

The voice matches. Harsh, untunable, unmodulated, the bitten words are thrown out like a cartload of stones on the road. No nice delicacy of phrase, no

choice of epithet, no rhythmic undulation. He talks. He does not preach. Blunt, homely, plain, rough, downright.

As he searches for his text, it is plain that his sight fails. He puckers up his eyes, grimaces, focuses the print, and obstinately conquers disability by force of will. 1 Corinthians xiii. 4-6. Charity! He puts the text on his anvil and hammers it. Hammers it on this side and that, and hammers out of it many sparks of practical common-sense.

Why, this Archbishop is not archiepiscopalian at all! He is absolutely free from clerical cant. He uses no hackneyed theological phrases. He talks to these working men as bluntly as John Burns. Indeed, John Burns is not more ruggedly unclerical than this quintessence of clericalism.

The Rugby headmaster dominates the Archbishop. His extreme lucidity, his camaraderie, his absence of "side," his rough candour, his authoritative air—these are schoolmasterly traits. Withal, he reiterates his points, beats them in and in and in, until you wonder when he will be satisfied, and in the act of wondering you discover how thoroughly he has driven his argument into your mind.

And while the grim Old Lion rumbles out his dry practical wisdom, one cannot help reverencing his hard, aloof, precipitous character. As he stands there, with the mittens on his venerable frilled hands and the historic cross on his breast, the great head of a great Church, a great Past and a great Present and a great Future seem to meet and mingle.

II

DR. CLIFFORD

STUCK stubbornly amid shrieking engines, groaning omnibuses, and struggling shops, Westbourne Park Chapel is a fit fortress of Nonconformity. Baptist, its lean austerity images the striding passion of the first great Baptist, John the Baptist, and of the second great Baptist, another John, John Bunyan, and of the greatest Baptist now living, a third John, John Clifford. John the Third, veritable voice crying in the wilderness, eater of sacerdotal locusts and wild honey of reform, straightener of rough paths, and valiant preparer of the way of the Lord.

Chapel, indeed,—lodge in the vast wilderness of London, ugly, bare, naked: wall and window, pew and pulpit, one grim defiance of religious sensualism. Look at that reredos of Dissent, hideous with barbers' poles, glorious only with the golden Word of God,—how it challenges the spiritual voluptuary! Ferocious simplicity shrieks from platform-pulpit, grins from its eighteen democratic chairs, where your beggar may sit cheek by jowl with God's ambassador; from its gaunt rail; from its plain table bearing Bible and British water-bottle; softened only by flanking armfuls of flowers—white chrysanthemum splashed with autumnal green. Congregation matches tabernacle: no furbelows, no Sabbatical coquetry—only the common people, traders and toilers, rude-featured, hard-fisted, ejaculatory, earnest, democratic.

No ritual, no processional pomp ; no incense-cloud save London fog ; no sickly candles. A door opens, and a frail shadow flits to the table, and drops into the armchair of convention, leans head on hand, prays. Is this the man who is shaking England ?

John Bunyan was a tinker. John Clifford was a factory boy. The thin, nervous, bloodless hands still remember their early toil. Brother of workers, is it strange that he sways his brethren ?

Head the old masters would have gloried in, poised in passionate calm of prophetship. All brow and eyebrow, animalism clean gone, spirituality paramount. No wrinkles, no furrows in face or forehead, but an intense, parched ghostliness as of white fire. Two deep hatchet-marks of thought between the half-quenched eyes ; square, unyielding beard greying and whitening from ear to jaw. Nose sharp, eagerly sensitive, ears large and alert, mouth unbeautiful but hard as steel, opening like a strong-room, shutting like a vice, the mouth of a man-at-arms, made for words of fire, not for sighing sibilants ; no curves in the veiled lips, only grim edges defiant of dallying compromise. Open, it is wide open ; shut, it is shut like a safe-door.

Clothes ill-fitting, ill-worn, unclerical. Dull drab frock-coat, turn-down collar, sober-coloured clumsy knot for necktie, shapeless trousers, elastic-sided boots on small, nimble feet. The whole garb eloquent of mind aloof from externals.

As we sing the hymn, the pastor joins us in sharp, staccato, not unmusical gulps. A hard man, you think, but suddenly he thaws. He is talking to the children. Tenderness of fatherhood in his tones, notes of motherhood withal, yearning rhythms, sorrowfully gentle modulations. And the children open their petals like flowers to the sunny flood of sympathy. A simple soul

this, beloved of the simple. He speaks in parables. "Why must I close my eyes when I pray?" Because God is inside you. The boys prick up their ears as he tells them about the prayer prayed by Lord Astley before he charged at the head of the Parliamentary forces at Edgehill: "Lord, Thou knowest how busy I am to be this day. If I forget Thee, do not Thou forget me." The eyes of the boys brighten. John Clifford, like John Bunyan, knows his boy.

After the children's hymn comes the people's prayer. No novice in the art is this man. The Lancashire dialect burrs out in the stress of his passion. He prays straight up without theological slang. God is not a remote listener: He shines over that transfigured face, its shut eyes trembling with vision.

A majestic figure, this thin old man, older than his threescore years and six, with frail neck, bald head, thin locks hanging jaggedly behind, stooped shoulders, lifting appeal of erect eyebrows, rapt shake of beseeching head, praying fervently for the childhood of this land.

Childhood, and manhood, and womanhood engulfed in the vice of London—the tragic vision breaks down the supplicator, his voice hoarsens with sheer anguish of desire. Even as Christ yearned over Jerusalem, so John Clifford yearns over the city of his soul.

After prayer, preaching. Philippians iv. 13, "I am able for anything in Him who strengthens me." No golden-tongued orator this, but a plain, blunt man, roughly hewing his sentences out of his deep quarry of zeal. No artifice of gesture, no theatrical gymnastics of voice. The tones and the gestures free, unstudied, but not ungraceful. Right fist flourishing like a warrior's leading a charge, sword in hand; hands crossed in quiet exposition; the spare, wiry frame now still as

stone, now shaking as if he were forcibly hurling the eloquence out of his body; open palms spread out in appeal; pointed forefinger of menace or accusation; fists dandled gently upward in joyous certitude. "I am able" (fist clenched) "for anything" (defiant thrust into the heart of things). Hands laid lightly on hips, bent body, protruded chin—sarcasm.

The voice runs through the whole range of tones, but its most characteristic habit is an explosive volley of rising inflections. It cries aloud for a strong man, a man like Paul, like John Bunyan. "I am going home to prison," said John Bunyan. Before long John Clifford may say the same. He is "able for anything," you feel, able as Paul was able. No trimmer, no compromiser, no balancer, is this man. He is made of the stuff of martyrdom. Not academic, not polished. No niggler, no dilettante, no hair-splitter, no sophist, no casuist, but a live thunderbolt of spiritual fire.

Great was John the Baptist, great was John Bunyan. Before he dies John Clifford may write his name on history as deep and as large as his forerunners.

III

THE BISHOP OF LONDON

THE Bishop of London. If one could imagine what those words mean, I am sure that no man could bear that stupendous name. It would crush him. Canterbury and York are tolerable, but London!

Have you tried to realize London? Have you wrestled with its mighty unimaginableness? Have you striven to see it for a second, not in fragments, but entire, all its immensities flung together before the eye of the mind? If so, you have seen a decent image of what the metaphysical mathematician calls the New Infinite.

Once I shook with sheer terror before such an apocalypse of London. Standing on the Dome of St. Paul's I saw that shoreless ocean of humanity tossing up to the astonished skies its grey billows of stone, lonelier than the loneliest Atlantic waste. Out of the stern circle of coldly impersonal life arose the impalpable despair that chills the soul held in the grip of the vast and the vague.

Can one drop in that monstrous maelstrom count? Pity surges over these myriads of insignificance. What am I? What are you? Gazing, one is tempted to answer, "Nothing," and in order to assert the supremacy of the personal soul, one must turn inward, and looking at oneself remember that the mystery inside

the meanest man is more than all the pageantry of outer vision.

But if I, a casual contemplator, shrink shudderingly from the Revelation of London, what of its Spiritual Inspector, Overseer, Watcher, Guardian, Warder? Woe unto him if he shrink, but unutterable woe if he shrink not!

The Bishop of London! Can you conceive him as the Shepherd of Six Million Sheep, with an imagination strong enough to pierce their multitudinousness. It is impossible. Not even a William Blake could see London and live. Even a glimpse chars the eyeballs:

“ I wander through each charter’d street
Near where the chartered Thames does flow,
And mark in every face I meet
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

“ In every cry of every man,
In every infant’s cry of fear,
In every voice, in every ban,
The mind-forged manacles I hear.

“ How the chimney-sweeper’s cry
Every blackening church appals ;
And the hapless soldier’s sigh
Runs in blood down palace walls.

“ But most through midnight streets I hear
How the youthful harlot’s curse
Blasts the new-born infant’s tear
And blights with plagues the marriage hearse.”

The Bishop of London! He must have enough imagination and not too much. The Enough of sympathy but not the Too Much of paralysis. Thinking these thoughts along the Sunday bareness of the long, unlovely Harrow Road, I come on Christ Church. Packed with expectant worshippers eager to see and hear the youngest wearer of the lawn, its walls bellowing texts like any conventicle, this homely church with

its homely parson and its homely people seems out of tune with the lithe, alert, fastidious 'Varsity man at the communion-table.

But that is Dr. Winnington-Ingram's secret. He has mixed the Oxford accent with the Cockney twang, mingled culture with democracy, gaining thereby more than he gives. Religion touched by reality is rare in the pulpit. The East End has touched this man's soul and saved it from the formalism of the professional ecclesiastic. No dreamer but a doer, his sympathy takes the English form of administrative passion. Tears can be useful as well as ornamental, can turn millwheels of charity as well as gush in fountains of rhetoric. With his Oxford distrust of emotional sentimentality, Dr. Ingram makes pathos plough rather than caracole. To quote Mr. Meredith, he thinks that "the plain facts are the persuasive speakers in a good cause, and that rhetoric is to be suspected as the flourish over a weak one."

An enthusiast withal. His bright face a clear lamp burning steadfastly with a single faith. A believer in himself and in others, he fronts life genially, with that shrewd, twinkling tolerance in humourous eye and mouth which is the best canticide.

A lean face eloquent of hard labour. Restless, quick, keen, nervous—sleep must be his chief torment. Every feature alive with intention, anticipation, purpose. His muscles coiled springs hungry for release.

The straight, swift candour of his outlooking eyes recalls the glance of John Morley. Add to it the sharp, vigilant precision of Anthony Hope, and you have a rough sketch of his expression. Bland honesty is perhaps the phrase for it.

The forehead marshals the other features. Slanting

trenchantly, it overhangs with violent abruptness, broken by the high curve of eyebrows that shout joyous welcome to the world. Nose long, straight, sharp-edged, as if set on a hone. Mouth masculine, large, tense, strong, the heavy upper lip finely hewn with its central panel carved clean and true, the lower meeting it with rigidly ascetic resolution. The jaw tremendously long in its angular sweep. The whole face a riot of acute angles, save the soft undulation springing from mouth to chin. Hair parted in middle where it is thin, but showing little trace of the march past of forty-four years. Hands that never keep still, the fingers long and sensitive, with habit of turning their signet ring.

Immobility impossible. Head thrown back, staring at roof—chin grabbed by hand—finger on nose, or lip, or cheek—arms folded—arms unfolded—hands clasped above head—a perpetual study of disquiet. No pose or posturing: even his bow Eastward is a kind of nod.

In the pulpit he is elaborately careless, as if determined to hide his gown as well as his gaiters. He has the knack of getting into the pews, not by eloquence, but by a hang-it-all-I'm-the-same-as-you-ness that masks the mitre. Luke xix. 10, "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." In a voice as harsh as Sir Charles Wyndham's, grinding his teeth, hardening his jaws, he bites out plain truths that make sermon-sleep impossible. He literally chews his words, and one could fancy the text a coster's quid, rolling behind the curiously twisted lips.

In his anathema against heresy and divorce, the Churchman comes out, but I think he puts more heart into his noble plea for the legions of the lost women in London, eighty thousand weak. Since he became Bishop of London he has sent every Sunday a hamper

of flowers to the Lock Hospital, for the pity of "Jenny's case" moves him as deeply as it moved Rossetti. Here, again, he clears his mouth of cant, and forces society to bear its share of the shame. Pinerotic cynicism he rejects, affirming the salvability of the foulest Paula. He bids the pewed Pharisee look into his own life. He fearlessly asserts the possibility of male chastity. In a word, he challenges civilization in the name of God. He sees the great London spectre in whose presence Parliament, Press, and Pulpit sit sorrowfully silent, sees it as Blake saw it, sees it sanely, not hysterically, and points at it, calling for Christian exorcism. A Bishop of London indeed!

IV

REV. R. J. CAMPBELL

THE City Temple without Joseph Parker is like Ithaca without Ulysses. The preachers who take his place are not all suitors for the hand of the Viaduct Penelope, but the public likes to play with the fancy that among them may be found one able to bend the mighty bow that hangs unstrung on the Temple walls.

Even in the religious bosom there are human passions, and though everybody hopes that Dr. Parker will send the arrow of eloquence singing through the air for many a long day, there is natural speculation as to his temporary vicegerent and ultimate successor. Who can bend the bow of Ulysses?

Foremost among those on whom the man in the pew has fixed his eye is the Rev. R. J. Campbell, of Brighton, who is taking the great preacher's place at the famous Thursday noon service. Conceive the dramatic poignancy of the position! Nothing said, but much thought: a silent, spiritual combat of personalities.

Nothing said in pew or in pulpit, but in both pew and pulpit—thoughts. Invisible battle is sometimes keener, tenser, larger than visible onset of armies. What is the secular rivalry of politics, of trade, of art, of letters, compared to the rivalry of spiritual captains? It is, or ought to be, the rivalry of that selfish unselfishness which springs from the belief in oneself that is belief in God.

At noon, then, out of hurrying Holborn into the spacious calm of the great Temple built by the great voice that is for the moment silent.

Galleries empty, floor filled with men and women of all ages and conditions. Old men, old women, middle-aged men, middle-aged women, young men, young women; business men in scores, clerks, clergymen, tourists, and, above all, the devout leisured class that pursues the preacher with the passion of the first-nighter. Also, the omnipresent American.

The Brighton pastor slides in. He is wrapped in a kind of personal stillness. He diffuses an eighteenth century reminiscence. I look for a patch on the clear, handsome face. Is it powder that gleams on his hair? Elegance of the beau, debonair carriage, gallant mien. I glance round the packed pews, and note the preponderance of the fair with a sly recognition of the human side of religion.

In this election the women vote. Christianity does not deny them the franchise. No great preacher is a misogynist,

But I look again. There are lines in the handsome young face, and the whitish-grey powder is nature's own. No austere wrinkles, but slanting creases made by the gentle smile that indents the cheeks. Not the snow of age, but the snow of youth, fallen in some paradoxical June. Mental stress? Mystic emotions? Personal pain? Perhaps. Who knows?

Manifestly imaginative, sensitive, nervous, finely and tightly strung, the man cannot evade life. It plays on his soul at all angles and he takes the whole of it. There is personal history in his face, shadows of old, unhappy far-off things and battles long ago. Yes, he has lived.

But the dominant look is peace, the peace of self-

knowledge and self-control, a strong inward unity of will and wish. Not a sterile peace, but rather a deep quiet sweetness, almost feminine, but not effeminate. Sweetness in the gentle, mobile mouth, sweetness in the gentle eyes, sweetness in the facial contours, sweetness in the fluent gesture, sweetness in the caressing voice—no wonder that women are drawn here in hundreds.

Not a fighter this, but a persuader. The Scots charm is rare, but he has it abundantly. It is that charm of temperament, that affable, gracious, winsome, romantic quality which is found often in the Celt, and seldom in the Saxon. It made Robert Louis Stevenson the fairy prince of literature. It made Arthur Balfour the fairy prince of politics. It may make Mr. Campbell the fairy prince of the City Temple. He is the antithesis of Joseph Parker. I can imagine his crying, "God save the Sultan!" but not "God damn the Sultan!"

Nevertheless, there is iron under the velvet. The full face is an alert oval softness. The profile is an alert, square sharpness. The features are cut in acute angles. The perpendicular forehead is clean as a White Star cutwater, the nose and chin zigzag trenchantly outward, the long square jaw leaps forth from the delicate ear with valiantly incisive energy. The shut lips harden at times into inflexible closure. One thinks of Samson's allegory. Strength may come out of sweetness as easily as sweetness out of strength.

The text is often an index to the preacher's bent. It is so here. 1 John iv. 20, "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar. For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" An evangelist of love, he quietly evades the fierce four Saxon words, "he

is a liar," and the fierce two Greek words, ψεύστης ἐστίν. Arnoldian "sweet reasonableness," modern suavity, and cultured charity forbid the rough candour of direct denunciation. Mr. Campbell is modern to the finger tips. He would not give the lie even to a hypothesis.

Nor is he topical. "Hate" for him is not hate here and now, hate between nations, between classes, between sects. He ignores these actualities, and sings a pæan to Vision and Love as shown by the witness of history and the witness of experience. He quotes from Ian Maclaren's *Life of Christ* a passage contrasting Christ with other great teachers. If it were proven that Moses, Plato, Socrates, Luther, Wesley, had never lived, their work would remain; but if it were proven that Christ had never lived—black darkness. A daring paradox, perhaps, but there is fine faith in it.

Then comes a rapid historical survey of Immortal Love—Polycarp, Fra Angelico, Melancthon, Loyola, St. Francis Xavier, William Penn, down to Catherine Booth and Gladstone, with Gladstone's valedictory message: "All I think, and all I write, and all I hope, is based upon the divinity of our Lord, the one central hope for our poor, wayward race."

But is all this merely enthusiasm associated with a particular person? The preacher retorts that no other person has produced the same result. Another daring paradox, perhaps. What of Mahomet? What of Buddha? What of Confucius?

After love in history, love in experience. Love of one man for one woman, love of one woman for one man, parental love—all culminating in the love of God, the soul's last step. If you have loved, you have seen God. He cites Maeterlinck's "Treasure of the

Humble": "When I love my neighbour, that which I love in him is that which is eternal."

Towards the close the preacher uses bold, simple figures. He appeals to the nympholept's higher Pantheism, to the mystic sensations evoked by silence and isolation on mountain top, in still valley, in sea-solitude. He employs homely metaphors, quotes familiar tags of poetry from Byron, Tennyson, Browning.

Not a phrase-maker, not a wit, not a humourist, his English is clear, direct, simple, with no literary tang, and with usual use of usual epithet and usual noun. On the whole, not an original mind, but an original temperament—sweetness in strength, strength in sweetness. A personal magnet, not a dynamic intellect.

V

REV. JOHN HUNTER, D.D.

MODERN men may be divided into three classes, active believers, active disbelievers, and indifferents. Of these three classes the indifferents are the most numerous. They do not trouble to "make assurance doubly sure" either for or against dogma. They have no faith to confirm and no doubts to drug.

The Churches have lost touch with these spiritual neutrals. Why? One reason strikes me. The Churches talk in a foreign tongue. They do not translate the language of theology into the dialect of to-day. They speak a dogmatic jargon which reiteration has dehumanized. The patois of the pulpit is the boredom of the pew.

In no other sphere, save politics, is the repetition of shibboleths so desperately revered. Truth is not sameness. Inspiration is not *ennui*. Faith is not an eternal frost. Religion is not rust.

If I were asked to say what parsons and pastors ought to do, I should reply, Don't be parsons and don't be pastors. Escape from professionalism. Be men.

It is a singular fact that each of the four "divines" whom I have already described is a man rather than a parson. Dr. Temple, Dr. Clifford, Mr. Campbell, and Dr. Ingram—all, in varying degrees, unprofessional.

So is John Hunter, the minister of King's Weigh House Chapel, Duke Street, Grosvenor Square. In-

deed, in many respects, he is the most modern preacher in London. He is steeped in the best of the old and the best of the new. He looks forward as well as back.

A spiritual cosmopolite, his views have largeness without laxity. He does not advertise, but in his pews are many eminent men who find in his sermons an ethical power somewhat resembling the ethical power of Sir Leslie Stephen. He fastens his teeth like a bulldog in the conscience and the will.

“His face reminded me of a dog I had liked.” Thus Miss Corkran writes of Huxley. As I sit watching John Hunter, I see in his face something of the dog’s noble fidelity, faith, and resolution. Those who know dogs will perhaps rebuke me for extravagance of eulogy, but I protest that in some cases a man may come near to the dog in these homely virtues.

Who built the King’s Weigh House Chapel? The interior is all lulling curves and contours, soothing tints and tones—restfulness in every corner. If you have brain-fag, go there every Sunday morning. It is a bath for excoriated nerves.

The large stillness of the chapel is a fit setting for the large stillness of the man, with his steady look of governed passion. A Scot by every token. Scot in dour uningratiating glance, in dour uningratiating features, in dour uningratiating speech. I thrill with delight at the discovery of this jagged rock sticking up in the theological rosary.

A face violently and vehemently round and ruddy, John Hunter strongly resembles the late Lord Russell of Killowen, and I catch myself watching for the snuffy red bandanna handkerchief, and listening for the legal growl. Eyes imaginative, eyelids eloquent, eaved eyebrows dragged down on temple at an acute angle with

forehead; firm, full, clean-shaven jaw and cheek and chin, strong nose with deeply-cut nostrils, a fish-mouth with grim honesty in the biting closure of it, unostentatious hair—on the whole, air of a City man who has retired and taken to preaching.

He has a quaint habit of closing his mouth between each sentence with an odd upward thrust of lower lip, as if he grudges to open his mouth. A reticent nature. Adze-marks at corners of lips are the only wrinkles in a lineless face with its skin as tight as a drum. Ear set low and far back.

His cosmopolitanism comes out in his hymnal and his book of service. Into both these books he has swept the essence of spiritual culture from all arts and parts. His temper is that of Baron Bunsen, who wrote in 1834 to Dr. Arnold:—

“I claim liberty for extempore prayer; liberty for silent prayer; and liberty for altering the liturgy. As long as the world stands there will be people who prefer a liturgy like yours; others who prefer extempore prayer; others free selection from fixed prayers; but all reasonable men would allow such a form to be best, to be really catholic, which would reunite all, assigning to each mode its fittest place.”

Catholic liberty runs through Dr. Hunter's service, but the dominant note is the Book of Common Prayer. Congregational Anglicanism!

On the soft-toned oak below the organ-loft facing the congregation is a plain cross of bright brass. The lectern is the Anglican eagle rampant. We chant the responses; the organist is surpliced. There is no fetishism, but there is an ordered beauty of procedure that is a charming blend of upholstered Anglicanism and naked Nonconformity. A harmony of the sects!

Text, Proverbs iii. 6, “In all thy ways acknowledge

Him, and He will direct thy paths." Reads his sermon in one long breath, never pausing from start to finish. Speaking in high, monotonous accents, he pours out his discourse in one long, rapid, curved cascade like the Staubach at Lauterbrunnen. To ears tired of mellifluous Cockney syllables, his Doric stings and stimulates. I hope he will keep it up. "Misery" is more awful than "misery," "inchury" than "injury," "chudgment" than "judgment." "Anly" is a richer word than "only," "gruth" is racier than "growth," and "bath" is better than "both." It is splendid withal to watch the Doric deepening as the preacher warms to his work, until in his most impassioned moments he becomes almost unintelligible to the feeble Southron ear. It is also comforting to hear once more that lost letter "r," which Englishmen fear as much as the extinct letter "h."

Not much gesture. He punctuates with his head, a little nod for a comma, a larger nod for a semi-colon, and a dive for a full stop. Now and then he lifts hand behind head and flings it down like a peg-top, or after bending it back on shoulder jerks it out like a pugilist. He italicises by drawing a long line in the air; for capitals, two lines; for large capitals, three.

His preaching is at white heat—white heat of logic rather than emotion. He goes straight to the serious side of men, presenting religion as a hard thing, a stern thing, a real thing—"The Strenuous Life." He has an eye on the hour. The need of direction is felt even in the great highly-organized churches. Voices of men in perplexity are heard every week. (We all think of the Protean Dean of Ripon.) Those who assert most strongly the authority of external standards fall back in their deeper moods on what the Quaker calls "the inner light." In the great crises of his life John

Henry Newman wrote ("wrat") that lovely hymn, "Lead, kindly Light," with its emphatic personal trust in the direct spiritual guidance of God.

I am not surprised to hear that Trinity Church, Glasgow, has recaptured Dr. Hunter. London can ill spare this Scot with his great, broad, brave brain, and his grip of modern needs.

VI

THE GHOST OF JOSEPH PARKER

JOSEPH PARKER preaches in the City Temple this morning. The hushed pews hear him. He is in the pulpit.

"What? Joseph Parker is dead."

Yes, but the Ghost of Joseph Parker is behind his Bible.

"No, it is an old man with white hair."

You are wrong. That old man is unreal. Joseph Parker is the real presence. Can you open your eyes without seeing him? Look, he is there.

"I cannot see him."

But the people see him. Turn round. Eyes in the galleries, eyes in the area—what are they staring at? At the Ghost of Joseph Parker.

"What is it like?"

I will tell you.

There was once a stonemason at Hexham. Unto him seventy-two years ago was born a son. The Ghost of that son is here. The Garment of the Ghost lies calm and cold at Hampstead. Is the Garment greater than the Ghost. Great is the Garment, but the Ghost is greater.

Now for the first time in long years the naked Ghost stands up before the finer sense of sight that peers out of these hundreds of veiled Ghosts sitting in tranced reverence. A Ghost triumphant!

All the oratory of his life flashes in his death. The

moments, the hours, the days, the weeks, the months, the years gather themselves together and burst into timeless flame. All he was he is, all he did he does, all he said he says. That is his Ghost.

See, he opens the Bible. He reads, with interpolation of pithy comment. He shuts the Bible. He prays.

He opens the Bible once more. He preaches.

You do not hear him? My friend, put an ear-trumpet to your imagination.

Hark! The sermons are galloping past us. Thundering thousands of them! Quicker and quicker they come, the horsed syllables of eloquence.

And as they sweep by the air grows thick with the ghosts of those who heard them. From every city and every county, from every country and every clime come the ghosts of the congregations.

Once more the sermon is poured like lava from the volcano. Once more the great Voice hurls itself hot into hot hearts. Old sighs are sighed anew, old smiles re-smiled, old hopes are hoped again, old thrills and tremblings and desires revive.

The ear-drums rattle again with the furious shout, the sonorous cry, the deep cheer of the spiritual captain—the shout, the cry, the cheer that echoed round the world.

Now rustles once more the wonderful speech, born on the brink of silence. Hush! The Ghost is whispering the old magical whisper that knows every corner and curve of this its house.

And now a gasp of laughter. Paradoxes, epigrams, humours, quips—all the light cavalry of rhetoric.

Is this a theatre? Yes, a spiritual theatre, the theatre of God. Why should good be as melancholy as evil?

Laughter is truth's brother. The journalists who reported the sermons of Jesus Christ forgot this. "Jesus wept." Why not "Jesus smiled"? He smiled at Cana, I am sure. Alas! we have a plenty of tear-bottles, but where are our caskets of laughter?

But the smiles fade, the laughter falls, as the heavy comminations rumble within earshot. Against lofty wickedness the stern appeal is launched. "God! Damn the Sultan!"

Did God hear the imperious word, half prayer, half command? Who knows? Did He heed? Who knows?

The Sultan still cowers in his palace. Vengeance still tarries. But the Ghost of the Preacher, menacing the throned iniquity, still awaits the lightning.

More terrible than man's sentence is God's reprove. The black-robed preacher, with voice of flame, is silent. Many of the iniquities, throned and unthroned, which he condemned, remain. How long? The word is with the world.

No beaten, baffled Ghost is this, but a Ghost victorious, flushed with conquest, crowned with death's garland. His soldiers acclaim him.

In hymn, in prayer, in anthem, in read Scripture, in joyous sermon, peal the trumpets of triumph. No mourning, no wailing, but joy and jubilation, as was his dying order. He is obeyed.

The old warrior with the white hair leads the chorus of exultation. It is a festival of victory.

Acts xi. 24, "He was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord." The Ghost of Joseph Parker stands erect like a Roman Cæsar while the roll of his achievements is proclaimed.

Never was certitude more certain, never was assurance more sure. Preacher and people glory in the culmination of life, Death.

Now is Christianity seen in her most majestic mood. The visible order is quashed and quenched. Mortality is annihilated. The grand outrage of nature is transfigured into a sublime benediction.

Poor is the spirit that is not awed by this insurgence of imaginative force that wipes out night and negation with a mighty gesture.

Even if Christianity be a dream, what a dream ! It makes these poor plain men and women with their streaming tears and ecstatic ejaculations, masters of destiny, lords of fate, emperors of doom.

Man's doubt is magnificent, but man's faith dwarfs it.

The great Ghost looks down on his people as the sobbing thunder of the Dead March wanes and waxes, waxes and wanes, and as he turns toward the mystery of eternity, the standing multitude is rapt with one emotion, confronting sun and stars with confident, calm surety.

He goes out, not into uncharted space, but to God ; they go home, knowing that where he goes they too one day will go.

Is not that sublime ?

VII

DR. ROBERTSON NICOLL

“**M**AN is a noble animal, splendid in ashes and pompous in the grave, solemnizing nativities and death with equal lustre, nor omitting ceremonies of bravery in the infamy of his nature.”

Many solemn obsequies have I seen in my day, the funeral of the great poet, Tennyson, the funeral of a great statesman, Gladstone, the funeral of a great queen, Victoria, and, last of all, the funeral of a great preacher, Joseph Parker.

All these famous burials were suffused with a magical glamour. The dead poet was lapped in the glamour of imaginative beauty. The dead statesman was lapped in the glamour of mighty personality. The dead queen was lapped in the glamour of historic magnificence. But the dead preacher was lapped in the glamour of mystic joy.

For the others death seemed a great end: for him it seemed a great beginning. Swathing his coffin with flowers and music, Christianity specially proclaimed her infallible perpetuity, soaring above the feeble pageant of poetry, eloquence, and regal pomp.

There was no strain or stress in this posture of calm exultation. The people in the pews talked without sense of desecration and regarded without disillusion the pathetic incongruities of an informal ritual.

There is a ceremonial of the soul, an office of the

emotions, an order of the spirit, which may dispense with external symbolisms.

No steaming shrine, no swinging censer, no tinkling bell, no gorgeous celebrant, no rhythmic prose, but only the living ritual of living men. In the pew and in the pulpit one spiritual democracy of happy grief.

One by one the simple pastors play their parts in the simple service, advancing and retreating with natural dignity, a venerable group, soberly epitomising the austere manhood of Dissent. In the centre sits a slow, quiet little man with projecting shirt-cuffs. That is Dr. Robertson Nicoll. Which Robertson Nicoll? Let me see. Nobody knows how many Robertsons there are. Nobody knows how many Nicolls there are. Why? Because nobody has taken a census of them. They are as the stars and the sands of the sea. They are found in every avocation. Many of them are editors, many of them are critics, many of them are business men, and many of them are Scots ministers, but all of them wear a long queue of University degrees.

A curious legend affirms that all these men are one man who has a thousand aliases, and lives the life of an *alibi*, but that is a fantastic extravagance. Dr. Nicoll is not a man: he is an army of men directed by one cool, controlling brain. It is said that there is one journal which he does not edit, but it has not yet been discovered. The list begins, but it does not end: the *Bookman*, the *British Weekly*, the *British Monthly*, the *Expositor*, the *Woman at Home*, &c. What is the meaning of that “&c.”? Nobody knows. I suspect that all the editors of the English-speaking world are Nicolls in disguise. This would explain the spectre of uneasy guilt that sits on every editor’s brow.

But while a cloud of mystery hangs over the Robertsonian editor, there is no obscurity about the Nicolline

critic. Everybody knows that all reviewers are pseudonymous Nicolls and all Nicolls are pseudonymous reviewers. One is a "Claudius Clear," another is "A Man of Kent," and a third is "O. O." For the rest, see the Press *passim*. "What about myself?" Well, I have my doubts about myself. I may be myself, or I may be an alias of an alias of the Pseudonym King.

But, passing from these occult mysteries, let us look at the slow, quiet little man with the projecting shirt-cuffs. He, at least, is not pseudonymous. The preacher was his friend, and as a friend, in obedience to his friend's command, he preaches the funeral sermon. Happy the Cæsar who has such an Antony!

All brow, all brain, all head. Above the keen, shrewd, vigilant, grey eyes the forehead rises into a great dome which dwarfs not only the other features but the whole body. It is a Wellsian head, developed at the cost of every other organ, and concentrating all the vital forces in the citadel of the brain. Every part of the man, save the eyes, seems automatic. An intellectual machine!

Automatic voice, automatic gestures, automatic everything. The last word of discipline, and drill, and organization, and iron order, and cold system. Condensation and concentration incarnate, squeezing the quintessence out of everything. The energetic inertia of the man is appalling—a devastating calm immobility, in the centre of which sits a demon of restless rest, armed with deliberate lightning.

Frozen features, void of expression, save a reluctant shadow of a smile that copies the contour of the thought that casts it. The nose a sharp outbreak of fearless curiosity, the moustache a vigorous explosion of secular common sense, the chin softly rounded with a feminine

tenderness, the hands inexpressibly sensitive, with long, thin fingers, too nervous to be nervous.

Not a poseur, being interested in others rather than in himself. Even amid the solemnities of the service his eyes are unconsciously observant, twinkling with cautious vigilance. An intensely objective nature, all his energies are thrown out into the surrounding life.

His speech is a duplicate of himself, the output of an engine perfectly made, perfectly lubricated, perfectly driven. Its speed a slow rapidity, its whirr a loud lowness. The Scots brogue is so thick you could cut it with a knife, grating and grinding slowly along the vowels, rumbling over the r's, and delighting the ear with tones and cadences unknown to the Southern ear. Never was utterance so icily impersonal, so successfully inhuman. A phonograph is exuberantly alive compared with this devitalized voice.

The gestures are the jointed gestures of a lay figure. Hand raised with stiff caution, as if it held a priceless goblet filled with sacred wine. Hands delicately raised with fingers neatly arranged. Hands held out like plates. Hands floating in the air like the hands at a spiritualist seance. Hands on lapels of coat. Hands on the point of being clenched, but never clenched. Hands over eyes. No transition in gestures, no curves, no gradations. Sometimes a gesture becomes forgotten and lies in the air a long time, waiting for attention.

Of the sermon I need not speak. It was emptied of egoism, uttering the friendship of the friend with one sole thought—how rich we were in life, how poor we are in death. It touched with exquisite tact on intimate things. It evaded dissonance of phrase. It avoided easy rhetoric and facile sentiment. Yet it suggested the weakness and the strength of the great preacher and adumbrated his virile humanity flecked

with human failing. Its chief virtue was the humanizing candour that turned the public preacher into the private man with his private pain and his private frailty. And somehow as he spoke our admiration took a tint of sympathy, and our reverence was mingled with affection.

VIII

REV. W. L. WATKINSON

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI was a believer in Baptista Porta's whimsical theory that every human creature resembles one of the lower animals, and he was fond of seeing in the faces of animals caricatures of his friends. It is strange that most of us object to being likened unto any animal save the lion, the eagle, the linnet, the nightingale, and a few other beasts and birds that have acquired respectable associations. This is bigotry. All the animals are our brothers, for the cosmic humour that riots in our features riots also in theirs.

As I watch Mr. Watkinson swaying dizzily in the pulpit of the City Temple I joyously salute him as the Giraffe of Methodism. How he came hither is a mystery, for assuredly the building was built before he entered: no door could take his length. Perhaps his incorporeal spirit can reduce it at will. Assuredly, his stature varies between six feet and sixteen. Now and then, indeed, the stretched neck throws the head up to the roof, and the stretched arms shoot to the farthest corners of the edifice.

Thin. Lean. Meagre. Spare. Clerical coat tightly buttoned round nothing save the big heart that thumps the broadcloth. Clerical collar hugs base of neck that soars up to the head as Nelson's Monument soars up to Nelson. Head carried in the clouds. Body an illusion cut out of black cardboard: invisible in profile—a fantasy in two dimensions.

Face of a genial Cassius, an amiable Iago. Features all paradoxes. Eyes alight with compassionate sarcasm; mouth curled with ironic love; over all an air of humble egoism tintured with satirical meekness and sardonic benevolence. Spruce, dapper, neat, as if fresh from the bandbox. Grey hair in wings over ears: parted on left and wisped over to right. Cheeks hollow, chin horned like Mr. Punch's. A phantom white beard as if sprung up between razorings, or like a forgotten lather. Reigning features—eyes and mouth with carefully perpetual smile.

The Methodist manner. What is that? The antithesis of the Oxford manner. Extreme unction, excessive emphasis, elongation of vowels, insistent ecstasy, gloating relish, gurgling joy, sincere insincerity. Methodism has its conventions, its ritual, its decorative ceremonial, like other sects. The Church curate intones after the fashion of the Church curate. Mr. Watkinson prays and preaches after the fashion of the Methodists. His groaning italics are symbols of the spiritual agony that uttered itself lamentably of old. They are now anachronisms, but they carry us swiftly back to the time of Wesley. We see the Evangelist of Evangelists preaching from a tombstone to that hallowed circle of saintly faces and all the ghostly company of the holy grave.

As he prays for the dying preacher in whose stead he stands, a Methodistical wave of passion sweeps through the pews, and a sudden pity stabs every heart, for the prayer is a prayer of resignation, of acceptance, of hopeful despair. "If it please Thee!" "Thou canst!" But behind the suppliant is Death, the Shadow of Life, and the light of faith only sharpens its edge and sombres its shade.

Receding from the abyss that yawns below the pulpit,

the preacher strikes up a merry sermon, just as the band plays jovial airs after a soldier's funeral. Psalm lxxxvi. 8, "Among the gods there is none like unto Thee, O Lord; neither are there any works like unto Thy works." A perilous text, full of pitfalls, but the preacher is wary, and delicately evades the dusty ineptitudes of Paleyism, boldly commandeering the munitions of science. Imperfections of nature? Climb close to the dome of St. Peter's. What is it like? With a rasping growl he retorts, "Like the inside of a brick kiln!" And over the pews rustles a sibilant smile—breath gently expired from a thousand nostrils, sighing like the wind brushing across a field of corn. Go down to the floor three hundred feet below. What is it like? "A celestial vision!" This image is the *leitmotif* of the sermon. Recurring again and again, and playing gently on the imagination, it acts as a mnemonic. "Apparent barbarisms show the artist." An ingenious solution of the enigma of existence, the puzzle of pain, the riddle of evil.

He does not repudiate Science: he patronizes her with respectful compassion and reverent pity. Her great triumphs he salutes, and then, with an ironical inflection, twits her with her greater failures. A scientist says that if an optician were to send him an instrument as defective as the human eye he would return it with a severe reprimand. "An optician could make a better eye than the one that showed you the way here this morning"—pause, satirical neck-craning, pursed and puckered features, derisive forefinger, then, with a long, strident, rasping growl of mockery—"but you couldn't see with it."

Mr. Watkinson would make a great comic actor. He is an elocutionary grotesque. His favourite sound resembles the sound made by a dog worrying a bone. It is an elongated snarl, with shaking vibrations in it,

as if he were chewing each word before he let it fall. He likes to send his voice sliding down a vowel. He is fond of squeaks and shrieks. His gestures are sensational. He brandishes his head at the end of his neck like an athletic python, his arms gyrate like a lean windmill, he washes his hands, he scratches his nose with fastidious accuracy, he projects his body over the Bible until it seems as if he is about to drop down on the anxious deacons below.

Sometimes he carries his head on a pike, with the jaunty indifference of disembodied irrelevance. Suddenly he turns his neck into a telescope, but the next moment he is an animated bulrush, and the moment after a Barnum illusion.

Yet through all his variations he holds the brain as firmly as the eye and the ear. "Could any government be worse than the government of God? Don't judge too quickly. You wait ten thousand years!" This sends a rustle of breathed laughter through the air, for any wisp of humour is welcome in the pulpit. Mr. Watkinson knows this, and often he tries to milk the cow twice, but it is a mistake to break the rule—one joke, one laugh. He knows also that people in pews like to be chaffed, ridiculed, and derided. "God laid the foundations of the earth, though you were not there, and yet they are well laid." "You young people think you know everything, and you do, pretty nearly." These sallies delight the man in the pew.

What pleases me most is Mr. Watkinson's generous perception of his own humour. He enjoys his jests even more than we do. Indeed, feeble souls are apt to flag when a joke turns out to be a recurring decimal.

For my part, I like a human preacher, and Mr. Watkinson's foibles and whimsicalities are lovable. He has a gaily exuberant personality, and he is as eloquent as he is eccentric.

IX

REV. MARK GUY PEARSE

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR has been publishing in *T. P.'s Weekly* an interesting symposium entitled "The Books of my Childhood." This morning, as I sit in St. James's Hall watching Mark Guy Pearse, my heart goes back fondly to the books of my childhood. Among them were certain Cornish tales, "Daniel Quorm and his Religious Notions;" "Mister Horn and his Friends, or Given and Giving;" "John Tregenoweth: His Mark;" "Rob Rat: a Story of Barge Life." These tales are milestones in my memory—little relics and remnants of vanished days. They keep the fantasy of childhood within hail and hearkening. "Daniel Quorm" was a Sunday-school prize. Shutting my eyes, I can see the low-ceilinged room, the long, snowy tables fringed with laughing girls and boys, the hissing urns, the rivers of tea, the mountains of cake, the smiling teachers, and the adults. ("Adult" was a mystery to me, a word charged with romantic meaning.) When strong pastry and weak tea had made us pensive, a gleaming shrine of golden books was unveiled, small legs were hastily extricated from bench and table, and small hands grasped glittering volumes. Pale are the raptures of royal investitures compared with ours! No Knight of the Garter, no wearer of the Victoria Cross glowed with pride like mine as I bore "Daniel Quorm"

through a mist of faces to my incredibly distant seat.

Heigh-ho! From the boy at the Methodist "soiree" to the being in St. James's Hall is a far cry, but the magical name of Mark Guy Pearse spans the gulf. Here is he: here am I. How can I caricature this incarnation of old dreams and forgotten smiles? Shall I lay hands on my father Parmenides? The glamour of old Sunday afternoons, of fireside readings, of a mother's voice, forbids it. Happy is the man who can mix himself thus with the fragrance of childhood and the sanctity of home!

But there is no collision between the man and the memory. Mark Guy Pearse is the embodiment of his books, a beardless Father Christmas, his bald head beaming and gleaming with the polished radiance of the mistletoe, his ruddy cheeks alight with the glow of holly, and his smile sparkling with the jolly blaze of a Yule log. Outside, in Piccadilly, the December wind is swinging his sharp scythe: here hundreds of us are warming our hearts at Mark Guy Pearse. His very voice claps you on the back, digs you in the ribs, shakes you by the hand, and stuffs you with cheery optimism. His good humour hangs a smile on every face, and I could both laugh and cry at the pathetic comedy of these rows and rows of relaxed features. Some of you, good folk, have small gift of laughter. Life has twisted a many mouths into its sorrowful grimace. But for a moment his grip loosens, and strange flashes of mirth deride him, as Father Christmas Pearse rings his merry voice like a Christmas bell.

The voice is the man. Clear as his eye, it chimes and peals through the hall, spreading waves of joviality in all directions. One seems to see the plunging sound

as it leaps from his lips into the air, roundly sonorous, smoothly deep. No rough edges, no cracks, no discords, jocund and rotund. With such a voice Dan Chaucer might have smote the rafters at the Tabard Inn, with such a voice Rare Ben Jonson might have trolled a chorus at the Mermaid Tavern. It vibrates with good cheer, good nature, and good fellowship: England vocal.

Its campanology ranges through all the tones from iron clang to silver tinkle. Its pity is a caress. Over lonely lad and lass, worn womanhood and dejected childhood, it softens into the wistful tenderness that lurks in all great hearts. Matthew vi. 14, "Your heavenly Father." The voice explores all the gentle secrets of fatherhood, human and divine.

His broad Saxon humour saves him from cant. He sees the irony of contrasts. He paints a portrait of the Chadband with a few swift strokes. "It would be absurd," he says, "if a robust, rotund, ruddy minister like myself were to talk to a poor hungry woman with a dizzy brain about a contented spirit."

There are no angles in his voice, his face, his body, or his Christianity. He proclaims the geniality of religion, the religion of geniality. Grim godhead does not make strong Christians. He derides the religion that is hard, pitiless, stern, exact, rigid, flinging at your head the Ten Commandments written on tables of stone.

Behind him is a silent orchestra of sympathy, sisters of the Sisterhood, uniformed in homely bonnets. I like to watch the soft smile that ripples along the row of fine womanly faces when the preacher turns a quaint phrase. At the end of the row there is an old man who might be Daniel Quorm himself. His quiet smile is good to see. The hearty fellowship of Methodism is

here, the curious equalizing enthusiasm, the spiritual socialism, the divine democracy which came out of John Wesley's great soul. Your true Methodist is chilled by Episcopal ritual or Presbyterian austerity. His religion is one long love feast.

Mark Guy Pearse is the marrow of Methodism. He bubbles over with its frank emotion, its fearless sentiment, its catholic sympathy. His cosy smile, his benignant gestures, his natural simplicity of speech, must charm the pale shop-girl and the tired clerk who are drifting through the grey sadness of a London Sunday. I believe he knows the shop-girls by heart, and can identify the Marshall & Snelgrove girl, the Peter Robinson girl, or the Swan & Edgar girl.

I like to think of the West London Mission as a great camp fire burning bright in the dark loneliness of West London. On Christmas Day, from five to eleven, this Father Christmas welcomes those who have no hollied and ivied homes. Tea and supper for one-and-sixpence, and Mark Guy Pearse's Cornish stories withal! Those who know the loneliness of London lodgings, the dreariness of "living-in," ought to know whither to send a Christmas cheque.

Be sure that Mrs. Price Hughes and her twenty-six good sisters will not waste your money. Father Christmas tells us tales this morning that would tear the cheques out of a miser's cheque-book. Women who have sewed themselves blind. Women who live on one meal a day, and who think a herring a luxury. Toyless children. One imaginative girlie dresses up the poker as a doll and takes it to bed with her. And I hear of dolls that cost £25, dolls that play the harp, dolls that talk and walk, dolls' houses fitted with real kitcheners, real hot water, and real electric light! Oh, you children who smash your toys out

of boredom, why don't you send them to these sisters?

And you rich men—Carnegies, Pierpont Morgans, Astors, Beits, Rothschilds—please send me by return of post a cheque for £1,000, to be spent in coals, clothes, blankets, bread, and toys. Do not be afraid to trust Father Christmas Mark Guy Pearse.

X

CANON NEWBOLT

AS I walk through the silent city alleys towards St. Paul's the empty air is shaken with rushing sound. The bells are flinging petals of music over the high roofs of great warehouses. The song-blooms drift between the grey walls and strew the asphalte streets with romance.

As I turn into the churchyard the shower of melody becomes a storm, and the massive pile seems to throb with passionate life. The "conscious stone" is not inert. No, it is alive with joy and energy. Its sombre immensity assaults the sombre sky with a volleying turmoil of interwoven tones. How can men look up at these marching walls and towers without emotion? How can they gaze towards the vast curve of the metropolitan dome without a thrill of strange wonder and dismay? Only a cathedral, you say. Ah, it is more than a cathedral. It is the genius of London.

Wren is not the real architect of St. Paul's. When he had finished his gigantic work, the task of building had only been begun. The master-builders had yet to appear. Who were the master-builders? You and me. Yes, the myriad souls of London have come here to add a personal magic to these cold stones and their thrusting contours. Millions of spirits, great and small, have entered into their crannies, their crevices, and their windy pinnacles, transforming the temple of God into a temple of humanity. It is London herself

that stands up here in groaning majesty, bearing her awful load of fate on shoulders magnificent, and brandishing above her swirling smoke the flashing talisman of the Golden Cross.

As I go through the great doors, an army of viewless symbols charges through the glimmering spaces down on my recoiling imagination. I brace myself to meet the onset of traditions, and memories, and legends, and as I reach the floor of the benignant dome I am caught up into the very breast of my grey step-mother, London, and her giant arms go round my spirit in an embrace that both menaces and allures. Austerest and sternest of stepmothers, yet how dear !

And now the long train of white-robed boys winds by, the symbolic cross steering its way through the standing people. At the end walks the preacher, a stooped student, wearing the careless aloofness of the scholar over his vestments.

The incomparable liturgy of the Church rolls and reverberates through echoing isle and transept, nave and choir. The phrases fall in flawless cadence and faultless rhythm. Wave after wave of spiritual prose surges over the great sea of devout worshippers. The air grows electric with the fused emotion of the multitude. For there is more than an idle attitude, a passive posture, in the demeanour of the congregation. A certain eagerness of intensity pervades the atmosphere. Is it possible, I wonder, that the Anglican Revival has behind it a stronger spiritual energy than is to be found in the other Churches ? It seems paradoxical even to play with such an hypothesis. But let the other Churches look to their inner heart and core of zeal. Laodicea is not always by law established.

The music is a challenge, a war-cry, an appeal. Bach's ecstatic anthem, "Come, Jesu, come," captures

the spirit by the avenues of sense. Its lyrical rapture sings in our blood. Its passionate poetry lifts us far above formalism, and opens the illimitable vistas of an exalted ideal. Thus the Church breaks up the fallow ground before the Preacher sows the seed.

It is a softened, subdued, and reverent multitude that Canon Newbolt faces as he stands below the great sounding board, and launches his voice into the shadowy spaces that swallow its rolling syllables. A keen, clerical, episcopal face, knitting itself into a wrinkled knot of concentrated passion. The whole man gathers his forces together and hurls them into the mob-man before him. The sheer violence of his dynamic energy makes his features a grotesque mask of furious will and headlong resolution. It is not words that the speaker is throwing out: it is himself. Stretching his neck, raising his head far back, contorting his muscles, creasing his cheeks into a hundred furrows, he cannonades the congregation with a fiery stream of explosive eloquence. His words follow each other like live shells. While one sonorous vocable is searching the farthest tomb and the remotest chapel, another pursues it, and another, and another, until the gigantic spaces are alive with singing and ringing sounds.

Isaiah ix. 6, "For unto us a child is born. . . ." The immortal phrases peal like the cry of a herald. The Preacher employs a big, broad elocution, aiming at the distance. He prolongs his terminal sibilants into a sinuous hiss—"hous-s-s-e," "grac-c-c-e." He cuts his consonants deep and true and clean. Yet he reads his sermon like lightning. Few stenographers could gallop level with his impetuous oratory.

An epigrammatist withal. "God is conservative." "God paves his road with the broken fragments of

society." "God wants us for what we are, not as bad imitations of somebody else." "We are not numbered: we are named." "We were born original; don't let us die copies." "Virtue and vice are often made out of the same stuff." "Castles in the air for the imagination to dwell in are better than pigstyes on the earth for sensuality to wallow in."

Flashing phrases like these illuminate the sermon, which closes with a fine prayer that is worth remembering: "O God the Father, who made me, have mercy upon me for being what I am. O God the Son, have mercy upon me for having been what I have been. O God the Holy Ghost, have mercy upon me for not being what by Thy Grace I might have become." A wonderful Preacher, surely, with his nervous impetuosity of utterance, his tensely impassioned gestures, his smile that is not a smile, and his prodigal torrents of eloquent speech.

XI

REV. THOMAS CHILD

“WHY are the churches empty?” The “Man in the Street” is putting that pertinent question to the “Man in the Pulpit,” but without pertinent reply. Why? I wonder. This morning I find myself in a church which is absolutely and utterly empty. By a caprice of irony it is called the New Church. The curious may unearth it in Palace Gardens Terrace, a dejected byway in Bayswater. Empty. Yet it is a fine, spacious edifice yawning with polished solemnity from its empty pulpits to its empty pews.

But I am here betimes. Perhaps . . . Hush! Was that a faint rustle? Yes. An old lady, with white gloves, comes down the aisle and gazes at me with suppressed astonishment. Will there be a service? Yes. But the congregation? Very small, but the Preacher is wonderful. All his sermons ought to be printed. Here he is. A little man with white hair and white beard comes in. The old lady with white gloves introduces me. The little man smiles and vanishes. One by one the congregation trickles in, seating itself in open order, two in the gallery, three in a corner, and a cluster at the back. In all not more than thirty! The New Church could hold many hundreds. I fancy it was crowded aforetime. The dark mahogany of the pews must have taken its raven gloss from humanity. The stained glass windows and the mural tablets

whisper of a prosperous past. Why is this fine church empty this fine morning ?

Two pulpits stand up like gigantic egg-cups to right and left of the altar. Octagonal cups, hoisted high on octagonal stems. Enter the little white man clad in a white surplice. With him a tall man with black hair and black beard, also clad in a white surplice. The little white man climbs into one of the egg-cups. The tall black man climbs into the other. Black and white—I catch myself speculating on the chilly contrast. The tall black man is the Reader, and the little white man is the Minister. “The Minister,” says the “Rubric” of the New Church, “represents the Lord, and the Reader the People.” I shiver as the service proceeds. It is a sepulchral frost.

The air is cold with the ghosts of dead illusions and outworn passions. Echoes of ancient revolts and controversies fall on one’s ear with a melancholy languor. “Through the doing of Uses.” “Without Uses, worship is of no avail.” “The angels of heaven derive all their happiness from Uses.” “Uses alone are heaven.” Ay me, here be Uses, but where is the happiness, where the heaven ?

Pathetic Rubric ! Thou biddest the People to stand during the Commandments, but the People are not here to heed thee. Thou forbiddest the use of “such phrases as ‘Let us pray’ or ‘Let us worship’ as not being Worship, and, above all, an Address or Invitation to do what the People are already there for the purpose of doing.” But, alas ! the People are not “already there” for any purpose soever.

Buttoning up my overcoat I grimly endure. The thermometer falls to zero. Can the preacher’s eloquence thaw our congealed blood. As I survey him, my heart sinks. He has the physiognomy of the faddist.

Cramped features, small eyes, and that inhuman goatee beard which is so often affected by cranks religious, political, socialistic, and economic. His personality is a kind of iceberg, diffusing polar rays of temperament. The huddled People shrinks into corners, cowers against walls, snuggles near the door. Mayhap these faithful few are the sole survivors of a multitude perished of spiritual cold. Frost-bitten souls!

John xvii. 25, "O righteous Father the world hath not known Thee, but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent me." Miracle of miracles! In the pulpit the iceberg turns into a volcano, and fills the church with the hot lava of eloquence. The icy personality is transformed into a glowing mass of lofty mysticism and spiritual aspiration. Out of Swedenborg's frozen metaphysic leaps a flame of faith and vision. The man bursts through the dogma.

Very noble is Mr. Child's proclamation of the truth that transcends the common conception of Godhead as Three Men in the Heavens talking to each other. He believes in divine humanity and human divinity. God is both human and divine. God was always human, for how could we be human if He were not? The Father is the divine love, and the Son is the divine wisdom. The human came from the very inmost of Jehovah. The Father is the divine in the Lord, and the Son is humanity assumed. There was no Son from eternity.

God does not act on man. God is in divine humanity. Divine humanity acts, not the essence of God. If the absolute essence of God were to touch the human spirit, it would wither it. God in His illimitable essence cannot act on a finite thing. There must be grades and degrees before the finite is reached.

Matter is the unreal thing, the last effort, the ultimate of the Divine. The humanity of Christ is the medium of contact between the divine and the human. The Holy Spirit is the divine proceeding from Christ's humanity. It acts on every soul of man. It is divine humanity acting on human humanity, uniting the spiritual and the natural.

This, says the Preacher, is something new and profound. But the world ignores it. Yet it feels this new power, this divine humanity, which acts to-day in all associations of men. All the social movements of the time, all the deeper consciousness of to-day, all the intuitive perceptions of things are but the radiating forth of divine humanity.

This vision of human divinity and divine humanity carries the Preacher into an ecstasy of oratory. This is the God of the future! All idolatries of Three Persons shall be dethroned! The white face flushes with passion, and the level voice thrills with prophetic frenzy. The union of the human and the divine! That is the millennium! That unites our affection and our thought, enabling us to think as we feel and feel as we think.

But this transcendental mystic has a practical side. The real basis for the kingdom of heaven is a regenerated earth. How shall we regenerate the earth? Not by the teaching of high truths, but by the bringing of these high truths down into practice. That is the visionary union of divine love and divine wisdom in human form, as they were united in Christ, and as they were united in dim eternity. Human divinity: divine humanity.

"Everything possible to be believed is an image of truth," wrote Blake in his "Proverbs of Hell." Belief is the believer. Let a man be judged by his

belief in his belief, not by his belief alone. This Swedenborgian Preacher, with his score of disciples, has the fire of belief in his mouth. Who has more? Withal, his spirituality is apocalyptic. He has the seer's gift of moral realism. He unveils the fury of time and space. He reveals the vanity of vain things. As I look at his tense visage, with the white hair rising nervously from the white brow, I think of Blake's lines:

“Bring me my bow of burning gold,
Bring me my arrows of desire,
Bring me my spear; O clouds, unfold,
Bring me my chariot of fire.

“I will not cease from mental fight,
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land.”

Yet the New Church is empty. Why?

XII

CANON HENSLEY HENSON

SOMETIMES one cannot see the wood for the trees. That is so in Westminster Abbey. You cannot see the Abbey for the tombs. Among all our great men we have never had a great sculptor. Therefore these dreaming walls are vexed with vulgar monuments of dead vulgarity, and our fane of fanes is choked with mean images of dead magnificence. Happily our memories are better than our memorials. The historic imagination overleaps the historic symbol, and in our souls there is a spiritual vision which transfigures the carven chronicle.

Darkness is the Abbey's best robe, and after darkness twilit gloom. As I sit hard by the Abbey pulpit this winter afternoon a tender veil of shadow shrouds the stone men in mystery. The wavering candles in the choir cast antic gleams on the choristers, and the lights in the nave are still half-strangled by the tired fingers of the day.

High up on the left the southern rose of glass pales its coloured petals as the outer greyness wanes. High up on the right the darker hues of the northern rose fail and falter. Every day for the past six hundred years this mystical withdrawal has wrought its magic in the self-same fashion through these dim spaces shapen aforetime into beauty by cunning builders whose art has perished. As I watch the silent vanishing of the noiseless sunlight, a sense of fellowship with

the fled centuries invades me, the cadences of the liturgy sound faint and far, the worshippers turn into phantoms, and time seems poised for a moment on his spread wings. A sanctuary of dreams!

My reverie is gently broken as the verger with his wand conducts the reader to his reading-desk. After the lessons the reader returns to the choir, and the verger extinguishes the candles. Then the white-robed preacher, preceded by the black-robed verger, paces solemnly from the choir to the pulpit. Is this the preacher? Surely it is one of the singing boys, not the man who wears the saintly mantle of Dean Stanley. No. This boy is Hensley Henson, the orator who "preaches to the times," the champion of Christian reunion, the repudiator of the Divine Right still claimed by the Anglican hierarchy. He has the slight frame, the smooth face, and the smooth hair of boyhood, but withal the stooped shoulders of the student, and as his head rises above the tasselled cushion the light plays on pallid cheeks that the years have hollowed.

Cadaverously anæmic. Features a mask of death. Emaciated. Shut his eyes, and he is a figure of mortality. I should not be surprised if he wore a cravat of crossbones. The nose is a pinched emblem of famine, and the tense nostrils are worn thin. The self-conscious lips strive vainly to cover the protruding teeth, the sinews of the meagre neck rise in long lean ridges. The head is small, without salient angles or contours. The hair, mouse-coloured and submissive, suggests a sensitive but unoriginal personality. The eyebrows are bristling arches of unrest, and under them blaze feverishly brilliant eyes that save the surroundings from insignificance. It is in the eyes that the sharp ardour of the man glitters. Watchfully distrustful, they are alight with concentrated purpose, which is cold rather

than hot. Here is a keen will that works at high pressure, a spirit that uses the last ounce of its endowment, a force that will not bow to its own limitations.

Like man like voice. Most made out of least. Thin, piping, reedy, it cracks and crumbles under the energy that works it. Now and then it mimics the grotesque timbre of Mr. George Grossmith, junior. Its lisp is rebellious. "Uth" is its apology for "us." But its owner gets as much out of it as Paderewski could get out of a boarding-house piano. He cannot make all the notes sing and ring, but he deftly selects the better ones and strikes them hard.

Ephesians ii. 14, "He is our peace." A written sermon, carefully prepared and proportioned, and lavishly decorated with quotations. Indeed, the quotations are nobly superior to their setting. Not a master of phrase, but a delicate conveyer and purveyor of jewelled sentences. Well and widely read, he has the vocabulary but not the form of the orator. Familiar with ecclesiastical history and theological polemic, as well as with polite literature, his sermons are digests of his reading, ornate echoes of the library. Himself lacking deep and trenchant thought, he delights in thought derivative and transfused. Most made out of least.

Yet there is what I may call the sub-originality of enthusiasm in his eloquence. Just as his eyes save his face from insignificance, so his enthusiasm saves his oratory from conventionality. Personality can remove mountains, and there is a flame in Hensley Henson's voice which sets his words on fire. He believes in his religion, in his Church, and in himself. That is the one thing that completes the circuit between the pulpit and the pew. Without it, sermons are corpses. Is it

strange that printed sermons are dull? Few preachers can put their personality into their style as well as their voice.

One large reality haunts this man—the disunion and the discord of Christians. “Chain up the clergy on both sides!” He quotes the famous cry of the old Erastian with fiery contempt for the current causes of conflict between the Churches. Resolutely ignoring the wrongs that wring fierce invective from the lips of Nonconformist divines, he passionately proclaims the revolutionary doctrine of the Lord’s Prayer. “Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.”

What does this imply? Surely it implies that Dissenters outraged by the Education Act ought nevertheless to forgive the injury inflicted by Anglican politicians, ought to stifle resentment, and endure even injustice with meek and gentle patience. An ideal high and hard, no doubt, but perhaps more Christlike than the doctrine of angry resistance to a grievous law. But how easy it is to preach this unearthly self-sacrifice when you happen to be on the side that benefits thereby? It is the harrow preaching the duty of resignation to the toad. Heigh-ho! Christianity is a tangled web, the world is the world, and men are men.

XIII

REV. C. SILVESTER HORNE

I AM no slave to the vice of punctuality, for I am sure that more is gained in life through being late than through being early. It is not easy to live up to one's ideal in this matter, and I have often been undone by a fast watch or cab. But with care one can achieve much, and this morning my tardy arrival at Kensington Chapel brings me an unforeseen sensation. I hear Mr. Sylvester Horne before I see him. Now, some men ought to be seen before they are heard, whereas others ought to be heard before they are seen. Of these latter is Mr. Horne. It is a delight to feel the shock of a clean, clear, primary impression. Those who understand the art of life are very fastidious in preparing for experiences. The soul is a camera. Its mechanism is complicated, fragile, sensitive, and few of us know how to work it. We allow it to photograph life promiscuously, pell-mell, in the lump. We ought to select our point of view, to choose the best light, to release the shutter at the right moment, so that the pictures inside us shall be worthy of their place on the walls of memory. Nothing shocks me more than the levity with which men make acquaintances. I have often waited years for the fit moment to "know" somebody. For "knowing" is not merely "meeting." Love, I am sure, is an accident of fine spiritual adjustment.

As I stand outside these closed baize-covered doors

I feel that I have stumbled on one of these nice concatenations of circumstance. Opening the door half an inch, a mellow, musical voice floats out. Hastily I shut the door, lest the first impact should be deadened. I have got my impression. It is virginal, fresh, and free from extraneities. I hear but see not. The Preacher is out of the range of vision, which strikes against nothing save a vista of bowed forms in the posture of prayer. It is enough. The Voice tells all there is to tell. Poignant sweetness of tone, poignant tenderness of modulation, poignant sincerity of inflection. It is strange that personality makes its own voice as well as its own face, its own glance, its own gait, its own gestures, its own creases on the palms, its own whorls and spirals on the thumbs. God created man after His image, but man recreates his own body every hour after his own image.

Cautiously, I let the Voice out again. Its sweetness suggests manly femininity, feminine manliness. It is made of undulating contours that yield to the lightest pressure of emotion. The ear responds to its subtle sweetness drawn out in long, sinuous mournful cadences. "Most musical, most melancholy." It is absurd to imagine that sadness is a disagreeable quality. On the contrary, there is nothing so delicious as polished sadness. It is free from the rude boisterousness of joy. I am never so intimately happy as when I am sad. Perhaps the common conception of joy is merely an ancient error. Adam may have confused the two states, leading humanity astray. The divine intuition of youth often re-discovers the lost ecstasy of sorrow, and revels in happy unhappiness.

As the joyous moan of the praying Preacher dies away, I enter the church reluctantly, but at once I am consoled by its quiet, soothing demeanour. Every

church has its own character, its own living manner and mien. The walls and windows seem to be sentient things that absorb the manifold emotions of aspiring generations. This chapel wears a wise, broad charity of tolerance, a homely ease, a welcoming smile. The building has worn itself into the shape of its inmates, and the inmates have worn themselves into the shape of the building. The magic of use and wont makes me feel in ten minutes as if I had been here for ten years. I recognize that fine old gentleman who hands round the collecting-box with its oar-like handles. Have I not conned his puckered face for a year o' Sundays? And there is Lord Justice Cozens-Hardy, sans wig, sans ermine, sitting in the corner of his pew with an habitual air that soothes my spasmodic soul. The very pew-opener, a polite old lady in immemorial black, radiates familiar custom. How charming in these neurotic days is this cloistral continuity, this peaceful permanence, this circumambient repose!

But these lulling influences do not fall into ignoble languors and lassitudes, for in the Pulpit stands young energy pulsing with vital enthusiasm, his splendid ardour silhouetted against the dreamy calm of his environment. Withal there is no peevish fretfulness in a passionate fervour which strikes its roots deep in spiritual rest. Handsome? Yes. How? As to the eyes. For it is the eyes that draw one's glance. Through them the man shines, imaginative, valiant, clear, and strong, a real Galahad whose strength is as the strength of ten because his heart is pure. His long, straight, swift look goes like an arrow through the air, for he has knocked down the screens of personality, and can fling himself out with the free, rich fulness that is eloquence.

A long face with a long jaw, the features irregular,

but pleasantly rounded by years of fortunate effort and harmoniously progressive activity. No scars of moral or intellectual anguish, no seams or fissures of doubt and hesitance. Not a complexity or a perplexity can be seen in the vigorous placidity of his countenance. His faith is as neat and simple as his dress, from the shapely frock coat, the lapels of which he grasps in the Balfourian fashion, to the well-tied white knot under the low turn-down collar. There is no civil war in his character, and the balanced unity of his temperament sets him free to project himself outward.

Psalm xxxix. 3, "While I was musing the fire kindled." Like most of our modern preachers, he reads his sermon, speaking very distinctly and deliberately. His gestures are semi-detached from his utterance, as if the impulse setting them in motion is arrested and recalled before it expends itself in muscular energy. He looks beyond rather than at his audience, as if striving for a mental insulation. Sometimes he shuts his eyes as if to concentrate his consciousness. Clenched fist shot out straight from the shoulder; both forefingers stretched forth at end of rigid arms, and then swept back in a downward quarter-circle; quick thrust of pointing forefinger; hand jerked close to ear as if "striking" an invisible trout with an invisible rod—these are some of the gestures that melt into the clasped lapels.

The sermon sparkles with racy phrase. Its main thought this: the ideal life is a union of thought and zeal; not a habit of brooding that never leads up to moral enthusiasm, and not undisciplined fervour with no thought behind it. He scourges the literary decadents who are phosphorescent and luminous with their very rottenness, who dazzle but do not help. When the world asks for bread they give it a diamond.

From them he turns to Wordsworth's "healing power." Although corybantic fanaticism would be a change in the West End, it doesn't last and it doesn't work. Since Jericho, no walls have fallen before mere trumpets. We must feel because we must think. Yet intellect is not the whole of knowledge. No man who has loved a woman believes that knowledge is for the intellect alone. The best knowledge comes with that fire of love which is the soul of enthusiasm. As the Preacher identifies the love of a woman with the love of God, his voice grows exquisitely gentle, his gaze remote and rapt, and a great stillness holds the people, strangely awed and thrilled by this clear cry of natural spirituality.

XIV

THE WHITE FATHER

HAVING said a solemn farewell to my friends, I set out for Brockley to hear that famous Roman Catholic orator, Monsignor Croke Robinson. All the veteran explorers whom I consulted as to preparations for the expedition had emphasized its difficulties and its dangers. Sir Henry Stanley, with tears in his eyes, piteously entreated me to stay at home, avowing that travel in darkest Africa is safe and simple compared to travel in darkest London on the Sabbath day. Mr. Nansen assured me that he would rather go to the North Pole and back than plunge into the pathless wilderness outside the radius. Mr. Walter Savage Landor strongly recommended me to select the Dalai Llama at Lhasa as my next "Man in the Pulpit," seeing that Thibet is comparatively get-at-able. Mr. A. J. Dawson mildly hinted that the Mad Mullah or the Father of the She Ass (Rev. Bu Hamara) are more accessible, while Mr. Cunningham Graham put in an ironical plea for the late President Kruger.

Contemning these counsels of cowardice I depart for Brockley, after making my will, disposing of my second best bedstead, and insuring my life. The first few hours of the journey are passed in a curious vehicle on four wheels. It is the size of a small castle or a large house, and weighs about a hundred tons. It contains one room plainly furnished, with two benches placed along each wall. These benches are upholstered with dirty cushions, on which the travellers sit side by

side, silently staring at those on the opposite bench. By means of an ingenious contrivance, the glass of the windows is left free to rattle, and thus conversation is made impossible, while attention is directed towards the coloured pictures stuck on the windows and on the ceiling. These pictures are mostly moral apologues, inculcating the duty of eating various viands, drinking sundry liquids, washing with divers soaps, and inhaling multifarious fumes. There are also seats on the roof, to which one may climb by means of a steep staircase. These seats are provided with stout leather mats, on which the traveller is expected to wipe his boots. This vast vehicle is dragged by two small animals, not unlike horses. If inspected through the wrong end of an opera-glass they look like a pair of mice harnessed to a portmanteau. They are driven by a very fat man with a very red nose, who is usually chosen for his proficiency in the use of slang.

As I crawl out of the omnibus, a dank fog engulfs me, and I grope my way towards the railway terminus, so-called because it is the beginning of the end. Ludgate Circus is justly famed as a mephitic labyrinth, uniting the tortuousness of the maze with the sulphurous horrors of Hades. In the centre frowns a wooden citadel pierced with pigeon-holes, behind which lurk ticket-sellers. All these pigeon-holes are shut. I knock at one. A head appears, jabbars, and nearly guillotines me as it vanishes. A damp man vending damp newspapers advises me to try every pigeon-hole until I reach the right one, but the same head appears at each and vanishes in the same fashion. Dreading decapitation I bribe a doleful porter to buy a ticket for me, and after waiting on a dismal bench on a dolorous platform for what seemed several years, a dark string of dirty boxes creeps cautiously through the gloom. It seems to stop, but as I grasp a grimy handle an indig-

nant porter hurls me back, demanding why I am entering a train in motion.

At last. I enter a dim cell, darkened by an oil lamp whose feeble flame hovers precariously on the summit of a charred wick. By-and-by my eyes dilate, and in the corner I see a huddled form, which growls: "Holy light, eh?" Thereafter I sink into comatose despair. Pale spectral lights sidle slowly past, shadowy buildings tip-toe by. Life turns into a sepulchral mirage. I forget who I am, where I am, whither I go. Phantoms creep into my crawling dungeon. Phantoms creep out. After many centuries of phantasmal panorama, Brockley! Reeling under the shock I stagger out into the sea of fog that rolls up these penitential steps, worn by generations of martyrs. Where is St. Mary Magdalen's? I wander through spongy streets, eating mist until I feel like a fog-fiend. On all sides pianos are tinkling against the fog-banks, and I feel outcast, homeless, desolate. At last I find a moist urchin leaning against a public-house. He leads me by sinuous ways to St. Mary Magdalen's.

Out of darkness into light! The tiny chapel blinds me with its brilliance. The many-candled altar flings a blaze of radiance on the snowy roof and walls. The choir chants melodiously. Outside, darkness, mist, and silence. Here, light, colour, and music. The long, narrow building is filled with folk sitting on two rows of plain benches, all visibly drinking a draught of the beauty that life lacks.

But the Preacher! Is this Monsignor Croke Robinson? No. He has quailed before the terrors of the journey. "Owing to the inclement weather"—so runs the apologetic formula. Under my breath I add—"and the inclement railway." Who takes his place? "A Premonstrant—a White Father," whispers my neighbour. But, alas! the worthy man cannot speak

English. His sermon may be eloquent, but nobody can catch more than one word in ten. Why should a French Prêtre be imported to preach in broken English to these good people of Brockley? Is this gentleman one of Cardinal Vaughan's French Legion, brought over to reconquer and recapture England?

The White Father reviles "Breetain," and the "Breetons," and those who "falsify the minds of the people." He invites the Protestants present to enter the bosom of the true Church, to forsake their heretical "seens." He speaks to them "faciam ad faciam, fass to fass." He sighs for the Middle Ahges of thees conetry, and for the Pure Gospel brought here in the Fourth century by Sant Owsteen. He pronounces the "th" in Thomas like the Greek theta. His i's are all "e's." Fat, rotund, complacent, bland, he is quite unconscious of his incongruity. The poor folk gathered out of the mist listen with dumb resignation, and as the monotonous gabble of garbled English drips unctuously on their humble heads, I think of Milton's stern anathema against

"such as for their bellies sake
Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold.
Of other care they little reckoning make,
Than how to scramble at the shearer's feast,
And shove away the worthy bidden guest ;
Blind mouths ! that scarce themselves know how to hold
A sheep-hook, or have learn'd aught else the least
That to the faithful herdman's heart belongs !
What recks it them ? What need they ? They are sped ;
And when they list, their lean and flashy songs
Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw ;
The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,
But swoln with wind, and the rank mist they draw,
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread."

So, escaping from "the rank mist" of the White Father, I draw a deep breath of the honest English mist outside, and go home.

CANON SCOTT-HOLLAND

SUNDAY afternoon in St. Paul's Cathedral. I sit under the Pulpit waiting to see and to hear Canon Scott-Holland. Hardly a chair is empty, for the Preacher is popular. The floor is paved with a mosaic of humanity. Before me sits an old man who might have stepped out of a Rembrandt canvas. The hard light from the Pierpont Morgan electrolier breaks on his black velvet skull cap, on his milk-white hair, on his ivory skin. Look at that charming old lady whose stiff silk gown still sticks out in grim loyalty to a vanished crinoline, at those rows on rows of carven faces, grotesquely diverse, diversely grotesque—all the riotous motley of life unanimously unconscious of its calm humour. The vergers go to and fro like crows. Vigilantly polite are these sombre servitors, solemnly marshalling belated worshippers into nooks and crannies.

Behind the iron screen the procession of choir and clergy musters. A stooped figure darts in swiftly. It is the Preacher in mufti. Now he emerges in canonical garb, and the undulating stream of white surplices meanders slowly between the dark banks of the standing congregation. Among the clergy at the rear, one instantly picks out the man with the nervously restless eyes set tight in a fastness of craggy features. As he goes by his sharp glances shoot out on all sides.

Beside him the others seem dull, lethargic, listless. His personal vitality strikes ringingly against one's consciousness. Most characters put forth a vague, hesitating hand across the dark gulf that divides ego from ego. Here is one that hits quick and hard. So deep its dint that the blows of the Liturgy do not obliterate it. Even Canon Newbolt's hissing sibilants in the Lesson reach only that subsense which is second-hand attention. Therefore, when at length the Preacher climbs into the Pulpit, he fits into a moulded impression.

The Third Sunday after the Epiphany: the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul. 2 Corinthians xi. 16, "I say again, Let no man think me a fool; if otherwise, yet as a fool receive me, that I may boast myself a little." As the Preacher tosses the text in long curves of sound through the reverberating spaces, his frame trembles with furious force. He speaks. Every line of the body is tense, vibrant, alive. The poise of the head is violent. The muscles of the neck clutch it fiercely, as if the thrusting, springing features were hounds straining at leash. There are no transitions, no gradations in the oratorical conflagration that bursts out like a dynamite explosion. The Preacher does not burn: he blows up. The sermon is a series of detonations.

In voice and in gesture Boanergesque. The iron vocables roar and rattle against Sir William Richmond's gewgaws. Surely the Duke of Wellington smiles a bronze smile in his dark sleep on the Stevens monument, smiles at these rumbling echoes of the guns at Waterloo. Surely all the slumberers below our feet are listening.

The grey walls clang back the clanging din until the advancing and recoiling sounds clash together like

brazen shields. The sermon is a host of charging syllables and strident cries trampling each other to death. The Preacher exults in the sonorous metal of his voice. He revels in the rolling liquids, in the deep, clear vowels, in the hollow o's and a's, smiting the sound with Swinburnian rapture. "The who-o-le truth."—"He has been to-old."—"So-o-ul after so-o-ul."—"Fo-o-r he would have ma-ade."—"A-a-as he was compelled to glo-o-ry."—And the clamour and clangour of emphasis is as far from the thought as thunder from lightning. A tempestuous duality of utterance, as if one man is reading the sermon in a whisper, while another repeats it in a shout. And the storm of sound has no counterpart in the sense, for the sermon itself is not impassioned, ardent, lyrical; but a closely reasoned, moderate, metaphysical argument. It is as if Dr. Clifford were delivering a sermon written by Mr. Haldane.

There is the same duality in the play of feature and gesture, suggesting a fiery horse ridden by a cool rider, the spur of mind rowelled in quivering nerve. This pervasive duality is duplicated in my own mind. I absorb two sets of impressions, sound and sense. The sense is submerged by the surging sea of sound that carries it on its crest. Struggling desperately against the thunder and the swirl of sound, at last I am blinded and deafened, and can do naught save crouch and cower as the billows break over my head.

Physiognomy is one of nature's jokes, for nature is the prime caricaturist. We are all caricatured by our faces. No man could possibly be so bad or so good as some men look. Nature has no decency, no pity, no sense of congruity. The one part of our body which we cannot clothe is the part with which she plays her most impish tricks. Some of us cannot live up to our

faces. Some of us dare not live down to them. There are clergymen who look like criminals, and criminals who look like clergymen. There are bishops who look like bookmakers, and bookmakers who look like bishops. No canon ever looked less canonical than Canon Scott-Holland, or more canonical than the late Charles Morton ; yet nature put the one in St. Paul's and the other in the Palace Theatre. Explain these things, men and angels !

The Preacher's face would make the fortune of a Sandow, just as Sandow's face would make the fortune of a pianist. It has the true John Bull jowl ; mouth gigantic ; crunching teeth ; pugnacious nose ; hard vertical wrinkles in the heavy cheeks ; thin eyebrows ; knotted eyelids ; ears set close to the skull and slanting backwards ; ponderous upper lip ; lower lip firm and full, turned down in a trench of sardonic humour. Above these rough-hewn features the bald head towers like a sea-wall over a rockbound coast, intellect based on physical energy. The whole physiognomy is that of the man of action, the fighter, the reformer, the iconoclast.

His gestures are martial. One expects a trumpet obligato. Taking a mouthful from his manuscript, he steps back and belches it out like a blast furnace. His clenched fist shakes with concentrated fury. He flings up his hand with a fierce flourish of the fingers. He flogs his tongue into a mad gallop, until the racing words collide and reel and fall into a heap with a crash.

What of his message ? I decline to winnow a rhetorical thunderstorm. His theory of conversion is a kind of Pantheism, illustrated by a magazine story of a man smitten with terror as he rides in a lonely prairie. Not conviction of sin so much as conviction of insignificance. Not so much a change of heart and will

as the sensuous mood so marvellously caught in Swinburne's poem, "A Nympholept":

"The terror that whispers in darkness and flames in light,
The doubt that speaks in the silence of earth and sea."

St. Paul he paints as a religious Byron, who would be gladly content to carry across Europe the pageant of his bleeding heart. And through all the rhetorical sound and fury I catch the moral cry, the deep spiritual music, the haunting ethical magic that shake the soul.

XVI

FATHER BERNARD VAUGHAN

MY pilgrimage through the sects of Christianity has taught me to despise the boundaries that separate them. The little hedgerows of dogma and the low stone walls of ritual are but trivial and temporary meanings. The ground which they part and parcel is the same. The life that pulses in the earth knows no national frontiers, and the life that pulses in Christianity knows no sectarian barriers. Only on the surface we scratch our shallow ditches and build our narrow bournes. Below our cathedrals and cloisters, our churches and chapels, the one spirit ever works invisible and inviolate.

Revolving these thoughts, I enter the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Farm Street, Berkeley Square. Far away to the right gleams a large oil painting. That dark Calvary, with its three dark Crosses silhouetted against the sunset, silences the shouts of the gorgeous shrines, the cries of the coloured marble, the moans of the stained glass. I listen to it alone. It sends my imagination galloping down the ages through the intolerable pageant of the past.

Amid the debris of dynasties the great river of Catholicism flows. Over it history leans, gazing at her own features. In this tragical mirror she discerns the passionate gestures of humanity. Kings and queens, statesmen and warriors, popes and cardinals, saints and martyrs, philosophers and poets, priests and reformers, the rise and the ruin of empires, the dull

agony of dim multitudes—back, back from the twentieth century to the first, back to the thin, clear runnel gurgling forth at the foot of that dark Calvary, with its three dark Crosses silhouetted against the sunset.

Folding up my magic carpet, I look round me. The awful continuity of Rome fills the air. Outside these luxurious walls the legions of science and reason thunder past. Here Rome is as Rome was and will be.

The same acolyte lights the same candles and swings the same censer.

The same lamp burns before the same shrine of the same Mother of the same God.

The same crown of thorns pierces the same brows of the same Christ crucified on the same cross.

The same priests chant the same sonorous Latin syllables, and bow the same bows, and genuflect the same genuflexions.

The same solemn bell proclaims the same stupendous miracle, and the same hands uplift the same Host before the same worshippers.

Semper Eadem! Always the same!

The Three Priests are incarnations of Rome the Unchangeable. They are symbols, not men. Robed in heavy garments that are sad with black and glad with gold, they sit side by side like men of stone, their hands folded, their eyes closed, their heads bent in sculptural calm. They rise like somnambulists, and move with automatic melancholy towards the altar. There they turn to stone again, while a far inhuman voice chants a far inhuman ritual. It is a masque of statues. The Three Marble Men glide from death to life, from life to death, without violence, without dissonance, without disillusion. It is a dream within a dream.

The unknown is terrible. These hieroglyphic postures, these runic obeisances, these sacred osculations, these undecipherable pacings and pauses, afflict the imagination with the sharp anguish of spiritual mystery.

Rome smites the soul through the senses. The whorls and curls of smoke writhe voluptuously from the silver censer swung by its silver chain. Our nostrils ache with anticipation. As the languorous fragrance stings our nerves, a wave of sensuous spirituality washes over the whole consciousness.

The lust of sight and the lust of smell are sated. Now the lust of the ear is appeased. From the hidden choir breaks out a flood of ravishing harmony. The passionless purity of a boyish treble clashes deliriously with the swooning languor of a soprano and the romantic glamour of a tenor :—

“There is sweet music here that softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on the grass.
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies
Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes ;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful skies.”

Is it strange that worldlings awearied of the world yield themselves to this Nepenthean charm ?

But suddenly the spell is shattered. The Preacher enters the stone pulpit, and throws the shuttle of war across the loom of peace. His face recalls Verestchagin's Napoleon. It is alive with sharp edges and keen curves. Sheer into the black biretta rises the high straight forehead, cleft down the centre with a clean vertical furrow. The alert eyebrows clutch the corners of the trenchant temples. The fierily ardent eyes shoot arrows of intention at the people. The passionately-moulded nose, with its eagerly dilated nostrils, cuts the air like a plunging prow. The ascetic

lips are strenuously mobile, swiftly responding to all the nuances of emotion. The jaw and chin are squarely set, and the small, sensitive ear is delicately poised on the symmetrical head. Such is the man to whom the Holy Father gave his own well-worn rosary as a spiritual Victoria Cross for spiritual valour.

Luke ii. 34, 35, "And Simeon said unto Mary his mother . . . Yea, a sword shall pierce thy own soul also." The sermon is simple, sensuous, passionate. Glowing eloquence poured hot from the heart. No notes, no manuscript. Well-built withal. A noble edifice of emotion harmoniously balanced and richly decorated with spontaneous phrase. No taint or trace of the metaphysical microbe. No pulpit pedantry. Lyrically free from the disease of thought. Throughout it throbs with the poignant pathos of Christ and Christians crucified. It is a bacchanal of rapturous agony and ecstatic anguish, a pæan of passion, joyous saturnalia of sorrow. It begins with a sweet carol of motherhood—Mary bearing her babe across the Court of Gentiles into the Court of Women, the sinless among the sinful, Simeon breaking into his "Nunc dimittis," and foretelling the woe to come. "Why must this be?" cries the Preacher, in tones torn with pity. Leaning out over the pulpit he whispers, "My brethren, did she bear it well?" Then he utters the *leit-motif* of the sermon, "Amor meus crucifixus est—my love is crucified!" Again and again through the fire of oratory that lamentable cry peals, fusing it into a white heat of emotional ecstasy.

From the crucifixion of the Mother and the Son he passes to the crucifixion of the Saints. With relentless realism he tells how Ignatius of Antioch prayed that his bones might be ground as flour to be kneaded into bread for the table of his Master, and how clad in his

garb episcopal he was thrown to the Numidian lions. "Amor meus crucifixus est—my love is crucified!"

After Ignatius, Perpetua. After the strong man, the fragile girl. Her father vainly implores her to obey the edict of the Emperor Severus, to offer one grain of incense at the pagan altar. She weeps, but no tears can extinguish the strong fire in her heart, and she goes joyously to the arena, deaf to the entreaties of her parents and to the piteous wails of her babe. "Amor meus crucifixus est—my love is crucified!"

A gust of pity and terror thrills across the hushed congregation. There is a heavy silence, a strained pause. Then the Preacher throws himself into the breach made in our emotions. "What is Jesus to you? Men and women living in a city that reeks with the breath of sin, I remind you that you are Christians. O my brethren, I implore you to go forth remembering this: 'Amor meus crucifixus est—my love is crucified!'" And on this clamant note of beseeching adjuration, with a last, large compassionate gesture of benediction, the Preacher ends.

XVII

THE CHIEF RABBI—AND A GENTILE

IT is a far cry from Rome to Sinai, from the Jesuit Father in Farm Street to the Chief Rabbi in Hampstead. Rome is new; Sinai is old. The Rock of Rome was hewn out of Sinai, just as the Rock of Protestantism was hewn out of Rome. As I open the doors of the sombre synagogue, I step out of 1905 A.D. into 1491 B.C., out of London Town into the immemorial Wilderness, out of To-day into "Yesterday's Sev'n Thousand Years."

Here Time is palsied and History a damp newspaper. All that is not, is, and all that is, is not. Behind me on the threshold I leave all the mushroom sects and philosophies of Christendom, and strike my brow against the vast Theism of the Hebrew Cosmogony. When the Chief Rabbi stretches forth his hands athwart the ages, he clasps the very hands of Aaron. When the Reader unrolls the Scroll of the Law, he breathes the very syllables of Moses. The Perpetual Lamp that hangs above his head holds the very flame, the very fire that was upon the tabernacle in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.

Is it strange that I am cut by my own incongruity? I could not feel more absurd in a temple of Isis or Ashtaroth. These grave men, wearing tall hats on their heads and bath towels round their necks, and jabbering fragments of an unknown language, afflict me like a nightmare. They upset my world. They smash

my environment. I battle against the desire to remove my hat. I am in topsy-turvydom, and in a comic agony I try to adjust myself thereto. In five minutes I am half a Jew. I catch myself envying the gloss on the Jewish top hat. I fume because I am wearing a Gentile bowler. I shrink from the mute reproach in the eyes of my neighbours. "Have you no Tall Hat?" "Poor Gentile!" "Ah, you cannot wear the Taleth!" It is terrible to be in a minority of one even for two hours. I am tortured by a growing realization of my infelicity. As the synagogue fills, and the pews are inundated with Tall Hats and Taleths, I cower in my back seat. Now the galleries brim with ladies, whose bright eyes rain down scorn upon me. It is too much. I am about to fly, but a pitying Israelite takes me under his protection, and patiently guides me through the labyrinthine ritual.

The service is oddly dishevelled. Grey-bearded patriarchs ejaculate quaint singsong cadences, mutter mysterious incantations, or chatter occult syllables in frantic haste. But the salient figure is the Reader. He wears an ampler Taleth than the worshippers, and on his head is a square cap of black velvet. He intones the Hebrew, following the musical points with incredibly fluent velocity. His tongue wags faster than a phonograph set at full speed. The smooth, slippery voice slides over the syllables as a mountain stream slides over shining slabs of rock. He never tires. He could go on for ever. My ear grows weary of these miles of incomprehensible sound. Suddenly the service breaks in two, the Reader chats with the Chief Rabbi, and there are more freshets of Tall Hats and Taleths on the ground floor, and more spates of Picture Hats in the galleries.

Presently the service starts again with a jerk like an

omnibus. The choir sings. The Ten Commandments are read in English. Then the Ark is opened, amid a hush as deep as that which preludes the Elevation of the Host. The Scroll of the Law is brought out, its cover glittering and glistening with gold and precious stones, and surmounted by a golden crown graced with pendulous golden bells. The Reader bears the heavy Scroll on his shoulder round the Synagogue. As the sacred symbol goes by, the people bow. One old man touches it reverently, and then kisses his finger-tips. The crown and the cover are removed, the Scroll is placed on the desk and solemnly unrolled. The Reader calls sundry brethren by their Hebrew names, for every Jew has a sacred as well as a secular name. One after another they read the Law, intoning it according to the Hebrew notation. Again the Scroll is borne round the Synagogue, "dressed," and solemnly replaced, and the doors of the Ark are closed.

And now the sermon. Dr. Hermann Adler is no orator. He reads his prelection in a husky voice, with a strong Teutonic brogue. His personality is invisible. He is a Chief Rabbi rather than a man. His face exudes dry scholarship and Rabbinical erudition. The features are hidden behind spectacles and grey moustache and grey beard. The voice is passionless, remote, aloof. He has no gesture, no trait, no eccentricity. A human Scroll, he rolls and unrolls himself. That is all.

Exodus xix. 8, "And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." The Preacher demands one thing, and one thing only, Obedience. To what? To the Law delivered at the foot of Sinai. Inflexible obedience has preserved Israel through centuries of anguish. Assyria, Greece, and Rome have perished. Israel remains. What of

the modern Jew? Is this adamantine steadfastness his characteristic?

The Chief Rabbi startles the assembled Jews by reading Mr. Street's essay on "The Paradox of the Jew." A Gentile sermon in a Jewish synagogue! (Have you read Mr. Street's "Book of Essays," published some time ago by Messrs. Constable? If not, you ought to read it, for, as the Chief Rabbi says, it is "very clever, trenchant, and incisive.") Here are some of the Gentile's sentences that smite the astonished ears of Israel:—

"The poor Jew fasted or ate dry bread when he could not get meat which had been duly killed; the rich Jew eats meat unclean to his fathers, because the other is not served at the Savoy Hotel. The poor Jew bound his phylacteries round his arm in the sight of the heathen; the rich Jew is ashamed of the Day of Atonement. The poor Jew gloried in his race when it was most despised and rejected; the rich Jew—now that no one but a fool in this country despises his race—changes his name and hopes to be taken for a Scotchman. [Rustling laughter in the Synagogue.] The poor Jew clung to his heritage, though the world battered him; the rich Jew gives it up to win a contemptuous smile. The poor Jew was a strenuous man, worthy in the main, despite his faults, of a glorious past; the rich Jew is a sham, barely worthy of an ignoble present. That is the paradox of the Jew."

It is a Gentile, not a Jew, who scourges the Jews this morning. The preacher is not the Chief Rabbi. It is Mr. Street. "My brethren," says the Chief Rabbi, "the indictment is severe, but is it not true?" He denounces the flaccidity, the laxity, the limpness of Judaism. He lashes the desire for assimilation. He scourges the Orientalizing of public worship, the sub-

stitution of the vernacular for the sacred language blessed by divine revelation. Can the Jew be respected who does not respect himself?

In a flash I see the secret of Israel. It is the Law, the Law, the Law. Since the Captivity not a jot or tittle of the Hebrew text has been altered. In it to this day are cryptic letters which nobody can interpret, letters written upside down. They are there because the Law is inviolate, and must not be altered by so much as a pinpoint. It is against this mighty tradition that the waters of Civilization are washing. It defied torture. Will it defy tolerance? That is the problem which confronts Israel to-day.

XVIII

CANON PAGE ROBERTS: A CHRISTIAN DECADENT

AS I enter St. Peter's, Vere Street, this morning I expect nothing new. Canon Page Roberts is a "fashionable" preacher. Was not Lord Roberts descried the other day in his queue? Hoping little, I try to get a seat by going early. I am bluntly told that the Preacher does not like the Press. "You'd better not let the Canon see you! A seat? All the seats are rented!" Well, if necessary, I can sit on the ground and wonder discomfortably why the Jew is more courteous to "the stranger within his gates" than the Christian. Finally, I am told that I may sit on a wooden bench by the wall, and there with due humility I sit. I cannot see the Preacher, but haply I may hear him. Lord Roberts comes in. Will he be benched? No, the verger beams and bows him to a seat worthy of his rank. I am glad that the army finds more favour in St. Peter's than the Press. But as I muse over the Canon's antipathy, I resolve to set him a good example, repaying intolerance by tolerance. To-day his words are heard by a few hundred souls. To-morrow they shall be heard by a quarter of a million. Why should his good tidings be reserved for the felicitous mortals who rent pews in St. Peter's? A free gospel shall have a free Press. And now let me record a touching example of Christian self-sacrifice.

A lady is standing. A renter of seats observes her. He leaves his place and gives the lady—his seat? No—a hassock! I think of Charles Lamb's essay on "Modern Gallantry," and I ask why the chivalry of modern Christianity is inferior to the Christianity of ancient chivalry.

And now the sermon. Psalm lviii. 1, "Do ye indeed speak righteousness, O congregation? do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men?" In a moment the powerful personality of the Preacher is at work. It steps out of the voluble Pulpit into the wordless Pew, out of Dogma into Modernity. It lets "the law of change" into religion, and boldly jettisons the savagery of the Psalms. There are eleven verses in this "pitiless Psalm." The Preacher throws nine of them away, and retains ("for worship") only the first and the last. It is a very old Psalm, and belongs to a very rough period in Hebrew history. One does not like to sing,—

"The wicked are estranged from the womb. . . . Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth. . . . Let them melt away as waters which run continually: when he bendeth his bow to shoot his arrows, let them be cut in pieces. As a snail which melteth, let every one of them pass away: like the untimely birth of a woman, that they may not see the sun. . . . The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked."

I wondered how far the Preacher would carry his dulcification of the Bible. How much of the New Testament would he keep?

Having boldly sub-edited the Psalms, he begs the Rationalist to recognize the soul as well as the reason, for pure rationalism blights the arts. An age of material sciences and feverish competition in trade

tends to a lower plane of conduct. Rationalism like that of the Eighteenth Century is barren as desert sand. It needs Romanticism to make it fertile. Are not some Churchmen more in danger of a dry, unfructifying Rationalism than Dissenters? "If I were to say to some of you well known to me, my dear friends and too generous supporters, that I fear you are in danger of losing your souls, I should say what indeed I fear, and you would do me the justice of believing that I was not merely padding my discourse with the pious verbalisms of a creed outworn." That is the new pulpit posture—a recognition that the pew has its point of view. "What is the attitude of some of my friends who think I am as little unendurable as any they are likely to fall in with?" This frank egoism is fresh, and prepares the way for the question: Is not your attitude towards the Christian religion one of negation? You cannot believe in those old Bible stories. The doctrines of the Church are inconceivable, unverifiable. But the history of thought is a history of rejections. Don't blame religion because in time its theory changes. Changelessness is imbecility. If reason is suppressed, you will become the victims of sacred legerdemain and fulminating absurdity. But the soul has rights as well as the reason. This is, of course, an absolute inversion of the old Bradlaugh-Ingersoll-Tom-Paine controversies. In those days Rationalism pleaded that the reason had rights as well as the soul. To-day Religion pleads that the soul has rights as well as the reason. What a revolution!

What strikes me most in this new gospel is the elimination of sin. Religion is presented as an æsthetic state: "Poesy may do something to help to save a man's soul, and art may do something. If there is no poesy in you, no art, no sense of sublimity, I am certain

your soul is withering away. Many brilliant intellects, many successful men, are as dry and desiccated in spirit as a legal parchment, and as destitute of spiritual power as the automatic machines that weigh sovereigns all day long in the Bank of England." This, surely, is religious decadence, and Canon Page Roberts may be saluted as the founder of the Sacred Confraternity of Christian Decadents. Assuredly, he does not wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. He does not break their teeth in their mouth. His dentistry is quite painless. He asks them not to bear a cross, but to wear a green carnation. Religion is Romanticism!

His utilitarian view of the incarnation is curious. He does not preach it as a fact, but rather as a kind of convenient aid to Rationalism. Enthusiasm cannot be roused by abstract principles. Doctrines must be represented by a person. That is what we mean by the necessity of incarnation. The highest ideas must be embodied. Religion, in short, is the working model of Rationalism. The incarnation is "something other than human flesh in human flesh." One thinks of the Arnoldian "something not ourselves." He who believes in deity in nature can have no difficulty. "Knowing how various are your opinions I am not insisting on some hard and fast theory, but—your philosophy must have a visible embodiment." Won't Christ do as well as Mahomet or Buddha?

Then, weakening his rationalizing position, he falls back on irrational faith. He quotes Wordsworth's cry—Thou best philosopher!—not Aristotle or Plato—thou little child! Then he turns to Tennyson's warning,—

"O thou that after toil and storm
Mayst seem to have reach'd a purer air,
Whose faith has centre everywhere,
Nor cares to fix itself to form.

“Leave thou thy sister when she prays,
Her early Heaven, her happy views ;
Nor thou, with shadowed hint, confuse
A life that leads melodious days.

“Her faith thro’ form is pure as thine,
Her hands are quicker unto good ;
Oh, sacred be the flesh and blood
To which she links a truth divine !

“See thou, that countest reason ripe
In holding by the law within,
Thou fail not in the world of sin,
And ev’n for want of such a type.”

The Preacher identifies himself with those “whose faith has centre everywhere,” and in the very article of his Rationalism he implores them to avoid what Scherer calls “the frozen solitudes of irreligious materialism.” He preaches not religion, but religious Rationalism, and when he bids them cry, “Now, Holy Father, come I to Thee,” it is to a God of Reason. I report. I do not criticize. All I say is that the eminent men (statesmen, scientists, lawyers, and men of letters) who listen to Canon Page Roberts must wonder how much nearer Christianity can get to Rationalism without ceasing to be Christianity.

XIX

REV. ENSOR WALTERS

THIS morning I go to St. James's Hall to discover whether Hugh Price Hughes is dead. I do not mean the man, I mean his mission—that West London Mission which he carved out of his heart. For it was more truly and really himself than the body that his soul wore out. The scabbard is gone. Does the sword remain?

I look round. Yes. It is there—in the orchestra, in the area, in the galleries. A little duller, perhaps, a little blunter, but, on the whole, there! How long will it stay? As long as that dark young man can hold it. But it is hard to play Elisha to such an Elijah, and the prophet's mantle can be a shirt of Nessus as well as a smiter of surges.

Clear-eyed, clear-faced, clear-browed, the young man fronts the people, a shadow of anxiety on his spirit. There is mournful imagination in the sombre, steady glance that searches inwardly and outwardly, questioning himself and questioning us with the same flash. He is a persuader rather than a fighter. I do not think he would care to smite the waters with the prophet's mantle. He would prefer to build a bridge. His chief gesture is the half-clenched fist. Now a half-clenched fist would have been useless to Hugh Price Hughes. It is a matter of temperament. Some men explode. Others smoulder. I think Mr. Walters is a smouldering fire.

This is the birthday of Hugh Price Hughes, and his favourite hymn, "Jesus, Lover of my Soul," is sung, heartily sung, but with no emotional ardour. Then the sermon. Revelation iii. 20, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." From the text the Preacher turns to the context, that fierce rebuke of Laodicea. Here, it seems to me, he is indiscreet. Everybody admits that the Church of the Laodiceans merited that most scathing scorn:—

"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."

The Preacher is right when he describes Laodicea as a Church of moderate, respectable, money-loving Christians. He is wrong when he hints at the possibility of such a Church being extant to-day.

As I listen to this young man I wax indignant. Why does he insult Christendom? To-day there are no lukewarm Churches. All the Churches are aglow with fiery enthusiasm, self-consuming passion, and wild zeal.

They are swift to denounce national and private wrong.
They fight foot to foot with evil.

They practise the precepts of Christ with unflinching fidelity.

They are almost fantastically fastidious in their contact with filthy lucre.

The rich man is set in the lowest place: the poor man in the highest.

So far are they from loving money, they detest it.

It is with the utmost difficulty that the State can compel the State Church to undergo the anguish of endowment at the expense of other creeds.

Nothing but a deep respect for law forces her to pollute her altars with secular gold.

Never, indeed, in the history of the world were the Churches so nervously sensitive to the taint of wealth, to the blight of riches.

Rich men, whose fortunes have been built up on the bones of the widow and the orphan, despairingly seek a church which will receive their foul offerings.

In vain does the thief offer golden chalices for the table of the Lord, and our cathedrals reject with contempt furniture for the House of God which is provided by the cosmopolitan gambler.

Rank and riches find no favour in any of our Churches. The sin is scourged, whatever may be the station of the sinner.

Every pulpit in the land thunders against splendid iniquity, and in every conventicle a John Knox hurls thunderbolts at exalted vice.

No mean paltering with wickedness eats out the soul of our priests and pastors. They never hesitate to attack wrong because it is strong, or falsehood because it is popular.

Impartially, as ambassadors of the most high God, they denounce sin both in the aristocracy and in the democracy. No matter how fierce are the passions of the people, they cry aloud and spare not.

Laodicea! It is no Laodicean Church which Christianizes War, which humanizes the Hooligan, and which deodorizes Debrett.

It is no Laodicean Church which pours oil into the wounds of the Unemployed, its ministers rivalling the police in the ubiquity of their sympathetic aid, its members hotly struggling with each other for the privilege of raising the fallen.

Does this young man not know these things?

“Neither cold nor hot.” What Church to-day deserves that condemnation? Nay, what Christian?

“Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing: and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.”

What Church do those words pierce? What Church says that it is rich, and increased with goods, and has need of nothing?

What Church knoweth not that it is wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked? As to the priests and pastors of the churches, are they not accurately described in the words of Edward Irving?

It is a spiritual work they have to do, therefore He disembodies and spiritualizes the men who are to do it.

It is faith they have to plant, therefore He makes His missionaries men of faith, that they may plant faith and faith alone.

They have to deliver the nations from the idolatry of gold and silver, therefore He takes care His messengers shall have none.

They have to deliver the world from the idolatry of power and might, therefore He takes care they shall be weak.

They have to deliver the world from the idolatry of fame and reputation, therefore He takes care they shall be despised.

They have to deliver the world from the idolatry of things that are, therefore He takes care that they shall be as things that are not, making them in all respects types and representatives of the ritual they are to establish, models of the doctrine which they go forth to teach.

Never, indeed, since the first Apostles set out, have the Churches been less worldly.

In an age of ostentatious luxury and ungoverned hedonism, the Churches alone maintain a severe austerity—an ascetic simplicity.

If Savonarola were in the midst of us he would chant a joyous *Nunc dimittis*.

If John Wesley were at Westminster, the million guinea fund would satisfy his insatiable soul.

Why, then, does the Preacher speak as if London were Laodicea? It is true that the work of converting mankind has been so successful that very few are left to convert. This explains the truancy of the male Christian. With fearless heroism men sternly deny themselves the luxury of church-going in order to make room for their mothers, their sisters, their wives, their daughters. Could self-sacrifice so noble be found in Laodicea?

CANON WILBERFORCE

THERE is an egoism of spirits and there is an egoism of things. Man is apt to think that he is the only egoism in the universe, but everything that exists is egoistic. The universe is an infinite combination of innumerable idiosyncrasies. Matter is not dead: it is alive with myriads of personalities. The minutest molecule is palpitating with egoism.

Have you ever found two churches exactly similar? I have not. Each church has its own sharp personality. As soon as you enter a church you feel its egoism acting on your egoism. It whispers to you strange secrets. It touches subtle springs of sensation. It looks at you with curious eyes. It changes you. What you were before you crossed the threshold is not what you are afterwards. You are obscurely altered and modified, not merely for the moment, but for ever. And not you only, but the church also. It is tinged with you just as you are tinged with it.

As I turn this corner, and see the hard, bare knees of St. John's, Westminster, at the end of the narrow street, I feel that virtue is coming out of it to me, and going out of me to it. As I climb up its gaunt steps I am subtly changed, and it is subtly transformed. As I sit down between the two great side-doors in the path of the gale that sweeps from north to south, I think of the folk who have valiantly met their death in the same

fashion, and I know that the church is also thinking of them. It is a stern, pitiless, implacable church, built in days when religion was a stern, pitiless, implacable thing. I yearn wistfully for the tender benevolence of Stonehenge as I wilt under the razor wind. This church delights in human sacrifice. Its dark galleries and its grim windows gloat over my lacerated flesh. With chattering teeth and chilling blood, I sit shivering under that vast ceiling that spreads like an inverted formal garden over my head. In the centre writhes an enormous bed of grey rhododendron. Round the stucco parterres pace the ghosts of the martyred Christians, whose melancholy names are carved on those melancholy mural tablets. Soon we, too, shall wander along that immeasurable marge. Already our features are greying into stucco masks.

But where is Canon Wilberforce? The service has half-unrolled itself, yet he is not here. Hush! There is a dim commotion in the far west. What is swimming in the sea of heads? A worn face disentangles itself in the distance. Slowly it moves along the central aisle. With a large episcopal splendour of gait and garb a large episcopal presence takes the stage. Irving as Becket or as Richelieu never made so magnificent an entrance. With trailing robes and sculptural immobility of gaze, escorted by a reverent acolyte, Wilberforce comes sweeping by. As the superb head with its superb pose moves with stately deliberation towards the seven lamps that swing above the chancel, wave on wave of personality undulates through the congregation. It is the force of Wilberforce! Why is he not an Archbishop? Never was a man more archiepiscopal. Now he stands before the altar, an incarnate genuflection, an embodied gesture. He makes the sign of the cross with an immensely gorgeous publicity. Even the self-

conscious, domineering, egoism of the old grey church shrivels up before the still more splendid egoism of this old, grey man. Such is the power of personality.

Every motion seems predestined, fore-ordained. He nothing common does or mean. It is an æsthetic ecstasy to see him climb into the pulpit, and turning grandiosely to the east, make the sign of the cross, and utter the awful incantation of the Catholic priest, "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, Amen." Then, as he faces the congregation, the large glory of his grandiloquence is unveiled. He has perfected the art of solemnity. I have seen kings and emperors, but never one who equalled the polished elegance of his majestic dignity. He is an arch-master of the grand manner. As I watch the fluent magnificence of his pose, I reflect with shame on the shallow and shambling histrionics of the stage. Here is a histrion at whose feet our greatest tragedians might humbly sit.

The Sermon? It is an irrelevance. Wilberforce is the Sermon, and the Sermon is Wilberforce! Albert Basil Orme Wilberforce. There is a sumptuous regality in these sovereign syllables, and the man sets them to sonorous music. One hardly cares what he says: he is he. Were he to declaim the alphabet, he would invest the vowels and the consonants with overwhelming awe. Revelation xxii. 17, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come." Age is always eloquent, and we listen with ready reverence to the admonitions of a preacher with one foot in the grave. I think it was Canon Knox Little who used to speak as one at the point of death. Canon Wilberforce this morning is an image of mortality. His fine face is twisted with pain, set in lines of suffering. Laocoon in the pulpit! He alludes to his "physical infirmities." Spasms of agony cross his

countenance. He bites his lip, presses his hand to his side, clasps the gas-bracket for support. I feel that I am listening to the last words of a dying man. His eyes are full of anguish. "As long as I am permitted to bear witness here"—we wonder how long. "I have declared the whole counsel of God—I think I can wash my hands of that." The sermon sounds like a valediction, a farewell, a last exhortation, a final warning.

The Preacher's appeal is poignantly spiritual rather than dogmatic. His Churchmanship is unrelenting, but it is broad as well as high. "It is possible to be a good Churchman without being a good Christian, but you cannot really be a good Christian without being a good Churchman." He compares the Spirit and the Bride to the two kinds of water in the Doge's Palace at Venice, one stored in a reservoir, the other coming from a natural spring. Both are precious, but the purest is that which has been least manipulated. "I am convinced that the most powerful appeal which I can make to any man is the affirmation of the eternal fact of the indwelling divine nature." Humanity in its inmost is the body of God. Not the god of theism, the external world-emperor conception, but the revelation of God as the indwelling life in all that is. Some unthinking critics have said that this conception is pantheistic. It is not pantheism. It conceives God not as a god, but God—not as a spirit, but Spirit, universal yet individual, transfused, if you like, but infinitely higher than that memory of God which we know as personality in ourselves. In Christ the full tide of this divine life flowed with unbroken power. He is the ideal and the prophecy of the future perfect man. Can we be continually conscious of this immanent divine life? Can we be independent of external aid? "I have known some Quakers who came near

this." But the Church is necessary. With all its faults, it is a divine, not a human polity, which man has done his level best to spoil. Then the Preacher turns to London, the modern Jerusalem, and declares it is a scandal to contemplate the indifference of the Christian community to the city's shame. As he ends, I glance at the crowded rows of worshippers, and realize with a stab of surprise that nine out of ten are women. Why is Christianity letting go her grip on manhood?

XXI

PRINCIPAL FAIRBAIRN

SAMENESS is the king of sorrows. Other sorrows are rosy with sensation. They may be terrible, but they are adventurously new, and life tingles in their anguish. The secret alchemy of egoism transmutes pain to pleasure. The greater the grief, the greater the subtle exultation of the soul. But monotony is unalloyed. It is against monotony that the spirit of man has fought since the beginning of the world. Sin is a protest against sameness. So is civilization. So is art. So is science. So is literature. So is religion. Yes, religion is a protest against the sameness of sin. The joy of sin is grossly exaggerated. There is no *ennui* like the *ennui* of iniquity.

Everybody must cultivate his garden. One man, one garden. For the rich there are many gardens; for the poor, few. Religion is the poor man's best garden. Here in a corner of Paddington Chapel sit Seven Old Women. They have come to cultivate their garden. Religion is their romance. Do not smile at their Sunday bonnets, their Sunday shawls. Every black bead that twinkles on their grey heads is a symbol of escape from the sameness of secular hours. As they draw their spectacles from the scabbard they draw their souls from the dark dungeon of dreary days. To you religion may seem the quintessence of sameness. To them it is a strange beauty, an alien wonder. You have many toys to play with. They have only one. To me it is a majestic miracle to see the viewless

airs of mystery blowing across humble souls. It is not a despicable power that brings out Seven Old Women from Marylebone byways to listen to the Principal of Mansfield College. Verily, religion is a divine democracy.

But the sameness of the service? Does it not oppress the young and narcotize the old? Doubtless. There is no lack of languor here in choir and pew. Even religion must take sameness by the throat and cast it out. But for me there is no sameness in the ruggedly gentle personality of the Preacher. His face is alive with character. It is a battlefield of contending traits that an old painter would have loved to capture. The shyness of the scholar wrestles in it with the ardour of the apostle. Its spectacled melancholy often clashes with its sudden raptures. It changes swiftly with the thrust of thought and emotion. The features seem unreal. They disguise the voice that issues from an immobile mouth, fixed like the mouth of a painted mask over a proscenium. They are sorrowful even when the voice is glad. The eyes are profoundly mournful, and the whole face seems to have but this moment ceased to weep. It is not a sentimental, but rather an intellectual melancholy, the calm, pensive gravity born of meditation. Life has not dulled with sameness this fine old face, with its dongas hewn deep from broadly jutting nose to jaw, its whitening beard, its restless eyebrows, and its pre-occupied benevolence.

The Preacher kindles slowly, but his eloquence gradually burns itself into a clear flame of reasoned passion. 1 Peter ii. 21, "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow His steps." The sermon is very long, but so fresh is the play of thought that it seems very short. Personal vision

suffuses the whole. Imitation is the essence of religion. Christ lived to be imitated. We live to imitate. The Preacher presents Christ as the romantic Hero of humanity, the superb, the dazzling, the magnificent, the glorious Man of Men. To this old man Christ is no nebulous abstraction, but a dauntless reality, a splendid comrade, a chosen leader. The very air thrills as he glorifies his Master, and the Seven Old Women drink in his pæans with glistening eyes.

The most tremendous passage in this great sermon is the repudiation of the Catholic conception of Christ. The early Church, the Church of Martyrs, conceived Christ as the quintessence of eternal youth and everlasting manhood, brawny, stalwart, muscular, vehement, as a young shepherd bearing on his sinewy shoulders the lost sheep; as the Redeemer, the Rescuer, the Deliverer. But when the Church ceased to live, she created another Christ. She imagined him worn of face, and weary of aspect; no longer the invincible youth, but a Christ wounded, emaciated, sick of life, tired of being, yearning to escape from his anguish. That is the Christ you see as you pass over Europe. The Preacher's voice trembles with indignant sorrow as he anathematizes that terrible dream, that miserable illusion. He condemns “The Imitation of Christ.” He bans Thomas à Kempis. “Brethren, I love not the Christ of the ‘Imitatio.’ I love no Christ who speaks of wounds and death.” It is curious that the modern Preacher should echo almost the very words of Mr. Swinburne in many a passionate lyric :

“The suns have branded black, the rains
 Striped grey this piteous God of theirs ;
 The face is full of prayers and pains,
 To which they bring their pains and prayers ;
 Lean limbs that show the labouring bones,
 And ghastly mouth that gapes and groans.”

Preacher and Poet unite in repudiating that ghastly perversion.

Very lofty is the Preacher's presentation of Christ as the uniquely Imitable Hero. Find a hero, says Carlisle, and worship the hero you find. But other heroes are not imitable. We cannot all imitate great poets, painters, statesmen, soldiers, kings. Christ is the pre-eminently imitable person in all history. He is absolutely alone, not only in the metaphysics of His being, but in the ethics. His wonderful speech the humblest can hear. The Seven Old Women now beam joyously at the Preacher. His example the lowliest can follow. Then comes a searching exposure of Metropolitan vice. The Preacher sternly lays bare the grim economic forces that turn a man into a machine anxious only to find the coal that stokes it, the passion of thirst that feeds the open door of the publican, the passion of lust that ravages every home, and marches through every London street where victims can be found. No smooth words these.

And the remedy? The imitation of Christ. Greater than any single Christ is a city of Christs. Can passion live in his presence? Can the man who looks after Him look after any one to lust? Splendid is this old man's challenge to London with its immense luxury, its vast delight, its immeasurable sin. And there is griding irony in the question put to him by an Oriental: "Explain how one who was so poor is the idol of a nation bent on wealth, how one who earned his daily bread is the ideal of a people who despise the man who has a hand of horn?" He leaves that terrible question quivering in the heart of London. And as the Preacher ends the Seven Old Women smile.

XXII

REV. ARCHIBALD BROWN

THE City and the Soul. That antithesis rings in my ears as I stand midway between Mansion House, Bank of England, and Royal Exchange, on my way to the Tuesday "dinner-hour service" in Bishopsgate Chapel. What has the City to do with the Soul? What has the Soul to do with the City? On all sides the money-making machines are thundering. Men and women, omnibuses and hansoms, motor-cars and broughams, drays and lorries, grey buildings, grey streets, grey slabs of sky—all the tumult and turmoil are but wheels and rods, screws and valves, pins and bolts, in the great gold factory of the world. Gold and grey, grey and gold—the symphony of Mammon! The names of kings and statesmen, of poets and warriors, grow pale in these terrible avenues of bullion. Other names flash—Rothschild, Pierpont Morgan, Hooley, Whitaker Wright, Barnato, Beit, Joel, Carnegie—sovereigns of the sovereign. It is the City. Where is the Soul?

Lift up your eyes to that towering façade, and read the tremendous words: "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." Titanic irony! If the newspapers one morning were to announce that His Majesty the King of Kings would pay a visit to the City at noon, would Consols be affected? If Jesus Christ tried to enter the Royal Exchange, would there be a panic? Is it cant to ask these questions? Let the text along the façade answer.

Through Threadneedle Street into Bishopsgate—a Mississippi of Humanity rushing between banks of gold and silver and copper. How grotesque are the faces! How comic their energies and indolences! In a hundred years other faces will make the same patterns in the same air with the same solemnity. Where then will be the mystery that lights these faces? Where now is the mystery that illumined the faces that made patterns in this air a hundred years ago? Where is the quaint miracle that once looked out of the eyes of Charles Lamb as he walked to the India House? Heigh-ho, let us clear our minds of sentiment, and, leaving behind the eternal vendor of everlasting oranges, the eternal policeman, the eternal flower-girl, let us turn round this dingy corner, and hear what Archibald Brown can tell us about the City and the Soul.

The little chapel is bare and square. Dissent shrieks from its nude angularity. The very pews are Puritanical, and the organ looks like a jolly reveller who has pushed his way through the wall, the pulpit hanging from his paunch like a watch-guard. A lonely cornet-player completes the festive incongruity. The area is packed, and the galleries are almost full. There is a sprinkling of women, but men are the bulk of the congregation, and their deep, rough notes dominate the lusty singing. The service is short, sharp, business-like. It is rattled through like an agenda. One has no chance of snatching a doze during brief prayer or terse sermon. Everything goes with a snap. There is no padding, no vain repetition. Time is money in the City, and the Soul has to make the most of her forty minutes. There is something to be said in favour of laconic religion. Christ was no wind-bag. Few modern sermons are as short as the Sermon on the Mount.

The Preacher is Spurgeonic. His unconventionality

is old-fashioned. He looks like anything save a parson. He might be an old soldier, an old sailor, or an old farmer. His white hair, white eye-brows, and white moustache gleam cheerily against the fiery glow of his features. His skin has a jolly wind-whipped red. His eyes are bold and bright and penetrating. His nose is trenchantly aquiline. There are comfortable concentric creases under his chin, and good forthright furrows have been ploughed from the inner corners of his eyes outward. His face radiates hearty English bonhomie and rough good-humour. He does not take his religion sadly. He wears no vinegar aspect. He belongs to that jolly Evangelical school that jokes the sinner out of his sin, and laughs the sceptic out of his scepticism.

Joshua i. 3, "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you." On this peg he hangs a whole wardrobe of racy aphorisms, quaint quips, and homely parables. "The original land transfer."—"There is only one landlord, for there is only one Lord of the land. The earth is the Lord's"—here the irony is not so mordant as at the Royal Exchange. "Joshua was no land-grabber." Why? "Because the wicked Philistines had broken the lease." (I begin to realize that Joshua was the first Imperialist.) "We still measure by the foot."—"Everything you stand on is yours." Then comes a very pithy illustration of the difference between ownership and possession. "You say, 'I have given my son Milton'; but until he has gone through 'Paradise Lost,' and 'Paradise Lost' has gone through him, he has not got Milton."

These homely turns belong to a bygone age. The Preacher sighs for the good old phrases of the good old times. "My old grandfather used to talk about 'experiencing religion.' We don't hear much about

that nowadays." The congregation chuckles over the Preacher's digs at modernity. Old men look knowingly at each other. Young men smile wisely. "All Christians have not the same Bible. I know some people whose Bible contains only the 23rd Psalm and the 14th Chapter of John." (That point goes home: there is rustling laughter in our nostrils.) Then the Preacher hammers out homely homilies on atonement, redemption, forgiveness, acceptance, sonship, with humorous sally and arch raillery. He talks about Paul as if he were in Cheapside, about Peter as if he were in Mark Lane: "Paul puts both his feet down"—"Peter breaks the record." He tells us how he made up his mind to read the Bible through. "It took me eleven years. I have got that Bible at home now, and I would not take any money for it." (By the way, isn't it strange that Christians think it is a marvellous feat to read the whole Bible?) "I am not ashamed of the word 'Creed.' A man must believe something, and he ought to know what it is." Not a subtle intellect this, but a blunt one.

The plain man talking plainly about a plain gospel is rare in the Metropolitan pulpit. But when the Preacher asks these City men, "Are you saved?" I begin to wonder if Whitefield and John Wesley have come back to life. "Are you unconverted?" The thing is indecent. It is bad form. Parsons don't ask those crude questions in these intellectual days. They leave that sort of thing to the Salvation Army. Yet they do not seem to produce better results than the Spurgeons and Archibald Browns. Mr. Charles Booth, with cold scientific precision, proves that all the London churches are losing, not saving, the men. Perhaps it is a mistake to administer religion in the capsules of culture.

XXIII

GENERAL BOOTH

DUSK. Out of the grey silences of Kensington Gardens I plunge into the scarlet thunders of the Albert Hall. Outside and inside the vast beehive are clusters of excited bees. Bees in crimson jerseys, bees in poke bonnets, all murmuring, humming, buzzing, darting, hurrying. The Salvation Army is here in force to acclaim its General, fresh from his victorious campaign in America. For this purpose they have organized every known form of noise. I reel as the clamour and clangour smites me on the face. Eyeballs and ear-drums ache with the blows that batter against them. The echoing concave of the monstrous hall is a multitudinous manscape. Valleys of faces, terraces of faces, ledges of faces, ridges of faces, lakes of faces, torrents of faces, cataracts of faces. Faces springing from the door, faces falling from the roof, faces peering over far summits. And over all the phantasmagoria of faces an immense drab devil spreads its vast vans. A sound canopy, you say. Perhaps. But are not those gigantic wings like the very wings of Apollyon? Is not Satan himself hovering above the puny legions of Salvation? See! Calm, unconquerable Evil brooding over the feverish insurgents of God!

Let me sift my impressions. Let me arrange my nightmare. These crawling myriads are not real. They are visionary symbols, incorporeal spirits to

smallest forms reducing their shapes immense, like the aery crowd in Milton's Pandæmonium. They are the immortal mortals who have cried and laughed for a thousand ages under a thousand skies. Were they not in Babylon and Nineveh, in Rome and Athens, in the temples of Baal and Ashtoreth, of Isis and Osiris, of Brahma and Buddha, of Moses and of Mahomet ?

On each side of the titanic organ are garlands and festoons of singers, hooded women robed in white and yellow, blue and red. At their feet five rows of bandmen run like bars of music with crotchets and quavers of gleaming brass. The oval arena is a fiery wheel of flaming hysteria. Around it rise slopes sown with brazen flowers that blare hot blasts of sound. Above are tiers on tiers of dim, pink blossoms tossed on sombre stems. Moving miles of human emotion !

A marionette with a helmet of grey hair dances on the platform. He is the Chief of the Staff. He waves his little hands. A hundred bands vomit discord. The manscape shudders and shrieks. A hymn is sung, terrible brass beating against terrible voices, terrible voices beating against terrible brass. A roaring tide of surging sound fills the hollow ear. The tide recedes, and the emptied ear drips with abandoned reverberations. The marionette kneels like an L on the bare boards. He prays. The prayer is laced with shrieks. Glory ! Hallelujah ! Amen ! The marionette calls for a sacred catch. The manscape sings :

" Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my love, my life, my all."

The voice of the manscape is heavy with yearning passion. Thrice it thunders out the distich under the spread wings of Apollyon. The moment is sharp with meaning. Three little L's, kneeling on the floor, ten

thousand singing as one, and somewhere in the infinitudes and unfathomables—a Listener!

“Sing it again with right hand uplifted?” The manscape is suddenly alive with wavering specks of white. So may the dead have stretched forth their hands to Dante as he passed out of the Inferno. Now the three figures stand up in unconscious symbolism, and though their crosses are invisible, who shall say they are not there? Then the “singing battalion” sings, and the manscape tosses and tumbles, lashed with stormy emotions.

All this is but the prelude to the symphony. The manscape is ready for the man. How shall he materialize? Suddenly the manscape is convulsed with ecstasy. At a door appears a spectral apparition. It is General Booth. He stands like a ghost at the top of a flight of stairs, tall and thin, with long white locks straggling over his shoulders, long white beard flowing down the vivid scarlet jersey seen between the edges of his black military frock. Thousands of brazen instruments sound a strident note, and hold it straight and strong. Above this brazen yell booms the organ, all its wind driven through one tremendous tube. Between these tearing parallels of noise crashes the shout of the manscape, now a demented and dishevelled vista of open mouths, shaken handkerchiefs, and tossing tambourines. The Ghost claps his hands, and the din redoubles. Men and women leap in the air, scream strange epithets, laugh distractedly, shake hands with each other, sob, shout, shriek, and whistle. At last the Spectre with the White Beard reaches the platform, and hoarse with howling the manscape sinks back into silence.

Then the General reviews his Army. Drury Lane could not marshal a procession more effectively. All

the work of the Army is shown in character. A Zulu warrior with assegai and shield dances like David, and, as he goes by, takes the General in his ebon arms. Coster girls caper. Slum officers carry a drunken woman on a stretcher. And as the bizarre masque trails across the stage the manscape screams Hallelujahs. Then the "British Self Denial Total" is telegraphed like a cricket score—£55,170 18s. 11¼d. With that facetious humour which the Army loves, the farthing is telegraphed first, and the manscape titters. When the final five is seen a great shout goes up, and Apollyon's wings shake with derision.

Now the General mounts the scarlet rostrum, which has been quickly erected. More delirium. "God bless the General!" At last the manscape gags itself, and a queer, worn, torn, cracked, corncrake voice begins to vibrate in the vast bowl. The attenuated apparition, with hands clasped behind the back, bends at the waist and stiffens, bends and stiffens. That is his sole gesture. It recurs with the regularity of a piston-rod, as if it were driving out the jet of speech that sprays itself over the thirsty manscape.

Soon I realize that the Salvation Army is William Booth, that William Booth is the Salvation Army. The man is a consuming energy of splendid egoism. His faith in God is only an alias of his faith in himself. He is a spiritual Overman. His conquering personality takes the manscape with a grip of steel. He is himself, as Loyola was himself, and out of the poor and lowly he has organized an army modelled on himself, vowed to faith, poverty, obedience, and self-annihilation. "For earnest faith, strenuous work, and real self-sacrifice for the good of others, the Salvation Army stands first." That is the verdict of Charles Booth. "First!" "As regards spreading the Gospel

in London, in any broad measure, the movement has altogether failed." That is also the verdict of Charles Booth. "Failed!" And as the old man, white with the snows of seventy-four winters, sways like a tall reed on the scarlet tribune, the wings of Apollyon seem to flap in silent mockery. "First," and yet a "failure" in London? Well, there is a failure that is immortal. This old man will live in history with the great spiritual captains of humanity.

XXIV

FATHER STANTON'S PROTESTANTISM

IS Protestantism a failure? Is the Reformation a fiasco? Father Stanton and Lord Halifax say, "Yes." This Easter Sunday morning in the Church of St. Alban the Martyr Protestantism is cast out and the Reformation set at naught. What is the difference between St. Alban's and the Oratory? It is not visible to the lay eye. The mural imagery is the same. The garb of the priests is the same. The altar is the same. The incense is the same. The ritual is the same. The same candles, the same genuflections, the same sacring bell. There is one discrepancy. At the Oratory the liturgy is unintelligible in Latin. At St. Alban's the liturgy is unintelligible in English. Doubtless there are minor variants due to the need of legal evasion, but in the main St. Alban's is a Roman Catholic Church palpitating with the ultramontane spirit. Round the walls are paintings depicting the stations of the Cross. High in the air above the chancel is an immense crucifix flanked by saintly images. In a niche to the right is a carven Virgin aureoled with stars and bearing in her arms the infant Christ. The gorgeously gilded reredos is heavy with images and emblems. The altar might have been transferred straight from a Catholic church. The three celebrants are robed as magnificently as their Catholic brethren. They weave the same ceremonial in the same patterns—advancing, retreating, bowing,

making the sign of the Cross, embracing, donning and doffing, down-sitting and uprising. The same silver censer is swung, the same fragrance floats through the aisles. The congregation displays the rapt devotion of Catholicism. There is no listlessness, no *ennui*, no indifference. The clock in St. Alban's has been put back 300 years.

The music vies with the passionate ecstasy of Catholic use. In addition to the organ and the choir there is an orchestra of wood and wind instruments. The violins wail and yearn, the drums throb, the trumpets peal, awakening delicious spiritual dreams and aspirations in the listening congregation. It is strange that the Protestant churches have failed to make full use of the art of religious sound.

Suddenly the voluptuous witchery of the suave ritual is shattered. Father Stanton enters the pulpit. His keen, violent, menacing face hurls an impetuous personality at the pews, and you feel the sharp shock of the collision. His features are stormy, reflecting the nervous intensity of his inner life. This is a fanatic, not a polished ecclesiastic. He is moved by fierier passions than the respectable conventions. There is a fury in his lips, that fury of religious exaltation that makes one man a martyr and another an inquisitor. All the sensational insanity of the man is in the buried eyes. By insanity I do not mean imbecility, but the unearthly quality that makes a man defy the level rules of common life. There was something in the insanity of Blake that interested Wordsworth more than the sanity of other men. So in these frantic eyes, glowing in dark caverns under their bristling crags of eyebrows, there is a tameless, supernatural frenzy that suffuses the whole face. It is a wild face, wild with unusual rapture, zeal, faith, and whatever else is above the

mint, anise, and cummin of polite existence. Wild, too, with the strange asceticism that dehumanises and devitalises and egoizes man.

Romans x. 9, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." The sermon is a series of personal assaults. Every sentence is hammered home by a bronze grimace or an iron gesture. The face of the Preacher is a map of the emotions. In ten minutes you see in it twenty passions. It scowls, it sneers, it scoffs, it pities, it hates, it loves, it beseeches, it condemns. It twists with ardour. It is distorted by concentrated appeal. The hard skin is drawn tight over sharp bone by sheer tension of some inscrutable force within. In the article of eloquence the eyes are shut and the lips are slammed, as though the Preacher were flinging himself on some invisible miracle, some unworldly secret. He uses his body as if it were an irrelevance. Now with arms folded he is hanging half out of the pulpit. Now his head sinks on his breast and is lost in the folds of his surplice. Now he violently thrusts his hands down like a diver. Now with head askew he stands rigidly staring at the people. His restless postures are as grotesque as the postures of Punchinello, but they are never ludicrous—the fiery sincerity of the man transcends all his mannerisms.

The sermon is a scornful repudiation of Protestantism. The Preacher denounces the heresy that doubts the Virgin Birth. "If you believe that Christ took His flesh from the substance of the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Ghost, you can easily believe that God purchased his Church by His own blood. It is the blood of God that is the blood of atonement." From this affirmation he proceeds to a stern impeach-

ment of the “Established Protestantism” which has banished the idea of keeping Lent and Easter. Three hundred years of Established Protestantism have crushed that idea out of the people. Ash Wednesday! The ashes are flung to the winds. Good Friday is a holiday which is differentiated from other holidays only by—buns. (At this the congregation laughs.) You have left these for the cold, cruel negations of Established Protestantism. But if you look at the top of St. Paul’s Cathedral you will see that the cross is gilded! With that epigram he abruptly ceases, leaving us bewildered, so violent is the transition from his tempestuous eloquence to the swooning rhythms of the sensuous ritual. It is curious that Father Stanton’s indictment of a “cold, cruel Protestantism” in St. Alban’s synchronized with “Dagonet’s” indictment of “our colder Protestantism” in the *Referee*. The lay preacher used almost the same words as the cleric, “What are Ash Wednesday and Good Friday to the average Protestant to-day? The former has lost all its meaning, the latter is chiefly celebrated by the eating of hot-cross buns.” At the beginning of this impression I asked a question which I cannot answer, but this I will say, unless “Established Protestantism” wakes up, it may find the question answered by facts.

XXV

REV. SILAS HOCKING

SPRING has broken into Bishopsgate Chapel this morning, and she makes us all very merry. It is good to rest our eyes on her gay gown woven of bright flowers—tulip, lily, narcissus, primrose, and daffodil.

“’Tis a month before the month of May,
And the Spring comes slowly up this way.”

Yes, Spring is not frightened by the dissidence or dissent. She laughs at us from both sides of the pulpit, and dances round the hard, bare, polished oak table.

“The faint, fresh flame of the young year flushes” behind the young man who is playing on the cornet some silent madrigal. He is blowing softly and fingering the keys by way of preparation. But, although we cannot hear the soundless tune he is playing, we know it is a blithe pastoral, for the daffodils nod their heads joyously and the primroses peep over the rim of their glasses.

“Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter ; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on ;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear’d,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone.”

But alas ! these our flighty and flippant dreams are suddenly shattered by graver affairs. John Knox appears in the pulpit, and the flowers tremble, and Spring hangs her naughty head. Well, John Knox should be living at this hour. England has need of

him. She is a fen of stagnant waters. Altar, sword, and pen, fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower, have forfeited their ancient English dower of inward happiness. We are selfish men. Perhaps he has returned to us again to give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.

"But men don't do these things. They don't rise from the dead now-a-days." Don't they? How do you know? Well, let us wait. Let us hear what John Knox has to say before we charge him with being an impostor, a vulgar impersonator.

As he stands there he looks very like what he looked when he lectured Queen Mary's ladies-in-waiting: "O fayre Ladyes, how pleasing war this lyeff of youris, yf it should ever abyd, and then in the end that we might pass to heavin with all this gay gear. But fye upoun that knave Death, that will come whitther we will or not! And when he has laid on his areist, the fould wormes wilbe busye with this flesche, be it never so fayr and so tender; and the silly soul, I fear, shalbe so feable, that it can neather cary with it gold, garnassing, targatting, pearl, nor pretious stanes."

This is the same tall, gaunt, stern, unsmiling preacher. His face is coffin-shaped and his cheeks are hollow as the grave. His long beard is grey, flecked with black, and black flecked with grey. His high, conical head is bald, and the steely glance of his eagle eye is not veiled by his gold-rimmed glasses. The face and the frame of the man are incredibly sharp and thin—length without breadth. His square shoulders are fixed at right angles to his neck, and their sharp corners cut the broadcloth. All bone and beard he seems as he begins to read his sermon.

Hebrews xiii. 13, "Let us go forth, therefore, unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach." A Knox

text and a Knox sermon. The voice is harsh and unmodulated, free from inflections, rising and falling in a long, melancholy rhythm which suggests an everlasting peroration.

The sermon is a series of perorations, and each peroration is a series of reiterative amplifications of a simple phrase. "It is easy to be loyal when the bands are playing and the banners are streaming in the wind. It is easy to be loyal when the air is filled with shouts of victory. It is easy" Thus, with the hammer of a phrase, he drives the nail of instruction into the board.

He does not overrate the intelligence and culture of his audience, as is the wont of some learned divines.

He avoids subtleties and refinements, and concentrates on the great, neglected platitudes, the vast, forgotten truisms. And as his voice beats the axioms and the elements into our brains, low murmurs of approval are heard, grey heads are nodded gravely, and wise smiles are interchanged.

"I am called, Madam," said John Knox to Queen Mary, "to one public function within the Kirk of God, and am appointed by God to rebuke the sins and vices of all." This morning he blows a loud blast against the monstrous sins and vices of an age in which religion is fashionable. "I say religion, not Christianity. Christianity can never be fashionable. A fashionable Christ is impossible, but there can be a fashionable religiosity."

He paints a picture of the early Christians who went forth without the camp, the very off-scouring and filth of the nation. Let us think of it, we who sit at ease in Zion, we who never made a single sacrifice! If we had their grit and mettle, we should stand up for our Protestantism that is being undermined. The great

drink trust would not cripple the nation. Men like Lord Penrhyn would not be able to defy humanity.

We have been screened so long from the blasts of persecution that our moral fibre has become like tow. The men who are prepared to suffer and die for Christ may be reckoned on the fingers of two hands. The followers of Jesus have returned to the camp.

We have overlaid his altar with cloth of gold. We have hidden his cross in the smoke of incense. Never were evils more rife in our midst.

We talk about taxation and depression, yet last year we spent 190 millions on drink. In these days, when Giant Beer is more potent than our preaching, when our Sabbath days are desecrated, when the census of our church attendance appals us, there is a call to England to go back to the first principles of the Gospel, to follow Christ, if needs be, "without the camp."

"The dread voice is past," and the timid daffodillies "fill their cups with tears." But, you whisper, it is not John Knox; it is prosperous and popular Silas Hocking, writer of innumerable tales read by innumerable readers. Fie upon thee, O base materialist, wilt thou shatter my conceit? Nay, though it be only "the foolish fantasy of facile flesh," I will not let it go.

XXVI

REV. CHARLES VOYSEY

WHAT is truth? During these adventures among the Christian religions one answer is whispered. Truth is anything that is true at any time to any man in any spiritual mood. Truth is a personal obedience to a personal conscience. Conscience varies with personality, and Truth is the highest form of egoism. Believing this, one is all things to all men. You reverence any truth that is true to any man, not because it is true to you, but because it is true to him, and he is true to it.

If I were to found a society it would be an Egoistic Society, the object of which would be the promotion of Egoism. Hitherto Egoism has been regarded as a vice. But the human soul is an ego, and it is the business of an ego to be egoistic. The Egoists would regard life as a means of cultivating personality. One soul one personality. Be yourself. This higher selfishness would regard all disobedience to the personal conscience as an expense of spirit.

Never despise an Egoist. Do not despise the Theistic Church in Swallow Street, Piccadilly. Do not despise Charles Voysey, who is the Theistic Church. He is a religious Egoist. He calls himself a Theist, but his Theism is egoism or Egotheism. Thirty years ago, when he was Vicar of Healaugh, Yorkshire, he said, "I believe in God, but I do not believe Christ is God," and he was deprived of his benefice. Thrust

out of the Church of England, he turned himself into a Church. He gathered disciples. In Swallow Street he found an old building which had been built by those exiled egoists, the Huguenots, two hundred years ago. There he has proclaimed his Egotheism since 1871. £60,000 has been subscribed for his work. One of his disciples gave him £3,000 for the distribution of his books and sermons. Over 16,000 volumes have been cast on the waters; 1,500,000 sermons have been printed. At present his sermons have 1,700 readers per week. There are Theists all over the world, as well as in the three kingdoms—in the United States, Canada, Demerara, Brazil, and Patagonia; in New Zealand, Australia, China, and India; in Germany, Holland, Austria, France, Spain, Italy, Greece, Belgium, Denmark, Norway, Sweden. Count Tolstoy is interested in the Theistic Church. Mr. Voysey's books have been translated into French, German, Italian, Spanish, Dutch, and Swedish. All this, it seems, in spite of "a conspiracy of silence on the part of the Press."

Theism is Christianity without Christ. It is Unitarianism. It is morality untouched with emotion. It is also Egoism, for the first article of the Theistic Faith affirms "the right and duty of every man to think for himself in matters of religion." It is also Universalist, being based on the hypothesis of ultimate good. It assumes the moral necessity of pain and sin. It rejects Divine Revelation, founding itself on Reason rather than Faith, though its keystone, the hypothesis of ultimate good, rests on Faith rather than on Reason. There is a good deal of paradoxy in its heterodoxy. Here are some of Mr. Voysey's paradoxes: "The first sin is the first step to virtue."—"To make any action virtuous, it must be possible to refrain from doing it,

and we must have a desire, more or less strong, to evade the doing of it. We must have sinful tendencies in order to become virtuous at all.”—“Without strong desire to do wrong there could be no virtue.” It would seem to follow that the stronger the desire to sin the greater the virtue of resistance. The greater the sinner the greater the saint. The goodness of God is infinite power to resist an infinite desire to sin.

But I pass from these subtleties to Mr. Voysey's central egoism, namely, his repudiation of what he calls “the idolatry of Christ.” He is Antichrist. He maintains that all the Protestant Churches, both Anglican and Nonconformist, “put Christ before God and in the place of God.” He specifies Thomas Arnold, of Rugby, Archbishop Tait, Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, and the Rev. R. J. Campbell as Christolaters. He goes so far as to charge Mr. Campbell with having asserted the equality of man with God, and with having laid the foundation for a belief in the real identity of God and man. He bases this charge on Mr. Campbell's sermon, “Supposing Christ were only a man,” in which he said :

“‘Only a man’—cease talking about mankind as though it were something different from Deity. The difference between man and God is a difference not in kind, but in moral height. From the side of God there is no line drawn between humanity and Deity at all.” Mr. Voysey deems this doctrine “abhorrent,” as tending to “wipe out any real distinction between man and God.” Perhaps Mr. Campbell would reply that religion is the science of wiping out the distinction between man and God, the science of harmonizing conduct with conscience, actions with ideals.

But I need not pursue this battle of egoisms. It is enough to feel the pathos of it, the mournful humour

of it, the tragi-comedy of it. Note its dual aspect—the aspect it presents to God, and the aspect it presents to Man. Consider the fiery industry of this Theist, this Egotheist—as seen in his liturgy, which is the Book of Common Prayer minus Christ—as seen in his hymnal, in which “Just as I am” and Frances Ridley Havergal’s Consecration Hymn are de-Christianized. Mr. Voysey has edited Christ out of everything. He has not left the Man of Sorrows a hole to hide in or a nest to rest in. He is a Saul who has never journeyed to Damascus, round whom the light has not shined, who has not heard the voice saying, “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?”

Like Saul he is sincere. See him there in his pulpit, thrusting his seventy-five years like a spear into the side of the Christ on the Cross. A Zangwillesque face, the nose humped and hooked, the heavy-lidded eyes coldly dim, the immalleable mouth hard as harveyed steel and dented with collision, the cheeks falling in two fierce folds of flesh, the cold voice calmly passionless in perpetual repudiation and denial and rejection, the hands and arms gestureless, the forehead narrowly retracted from thorny eyebrows shrieking suspicious defiance like a zareba; the iron-grey hair still bristling in vigilant revolt; the frame small, lean, wiry, crouched in shoulder under the chill white surplice stoled with black. Certitude of egoism, egoism of certitude, incarnate.

Theism is not all negation, unless cremation is negation. It preserves its own ashes. Seven urns are ranged along the wall like a silent chorus, the taciturnity of death gazing down on the garrulity of life. One is a many-columned templet, its furtive marble murmuring old pagan mystery, and asking the answerless question. As the Preacher denounces Anglican

error, Army Guild heresy, mercenary priestcraft, sacrifice of the Mass, prayers for the dead, the old pathos of humanity beats in his septuagenarian voice, pulses in our ears, and falls back broken and baffled from these cold caskets filled with life's mean remainder. Yet "man is a noble animal, splendid in ashes," and "life is a pure flame, and we live by an invisible sun within us."

XXVII

CANON BARKER

“And people of rank, to correct their ‘tone,’
Went out of town to *Marybone*.”

SUNDAY morning in Marylebone. Rain muffled in smoke, its grey threads strung with pearls of soot. The streets are wet mirrors mysterious with flying shadows of turning wheels and rhythmic horses. Dull light broken on the creased capes of omnibus drivers, on their vast aprons, on their tarred hats. Miles of gleaming roofs and streaming windows. The shops are shut, the streets are blind, and London listens to the plashy crackle of the rain, listens and grows sad.

Thridding the damp squalors of the Marylebone Road, we pass two great caravanserais, one for the rich (a hotel), one for the poor (a workhouse). At the workhouse windows old men are peering out, silver beards and creamy craniums watching the dank procession of life they have left. And this is Marylebone Parish Church, sombrely majestic in its ugly immensity, echoing the very soul of London in its pillared gloom, gazing moodily towards the giant portals of Euston—Euston, the terrible mouth of London, the dark maw that devours multitudes.

Let us go in. Whew! What a church! The ceiling is nearly as large as Lord's. You could play cricket on it. And the immense galleries, the enormous arena! The eye faints in these huge spaces unrelieved

by pointed arch or soaring column. But see, to right and left, a splash of colour! Sixteen little girls in four little pews, their white caps coquettishly tied up with blue, their white pinafores concealing the charity drab save where it shows below the elbow. Here is the other end of the irony we saw at the workhouse windows—there the poor old, here the poor young. Somehow, these sixteen little girls in their white and blue and drab seem to arraign the massive placidity of the church. The stained-glass angels avert their rosy faces, and the coloured marble turns cold in the presence of children clad in the merry livery of unmerited misfortune.

Two by two the white choristers curl into the choir under the painted curve of the half-dome, Canon Barker's twinkling geniality putting a sting of sharp humour into the tail of the procession. A little man, alert with restless vitality, his keen eyes darting short stabs of inquiry as he walks, and his candid personality tingling with quick relish and sharp gusto for his office. He rejoices in his work. He wears his gown with the frank flamboyancy of the born priest. His staccato glance at the congregation is a benediction, possessive in its suave regard, benignly approbative, affably content. His crisp cheeriness strikes a ringing note of jocund comradeship on the square dignity of the church.

By-and-by he is escorted by his sexton to the reading-desk. He polishes his head and face with his handkerchief. He polishes his eyeglasses with his surplice. He pulls down his black stole, and twitches a sharp smile. His smile is a muscular habit, tightening lips and wrinkling cheeks at the end of each sentence. It is part of his perpetual benevolence. It is a kind of physical philosophy, a sign and symbol of a tolerant

posture towards life. "Don't worry," it says, "all's well." It is an ecclesiastical smile. You often see it on the ecclesiastical face. The Pope wears it. It is the smile of moral, intellectual, and spiritual certitude. You may say that Canon Barker's smile is like Lord Burleigh's nod, but if there are sermons in stones, surely there may be sermons in smiles. Every man has a smile of his own, and the better the man the better the smile. (I have never been quite satisfied with my own smile.)

Canon Barker's smile is a sermon, and his sermon is a smile. John xx. 19, "Peace be unto you." As he expounds the religion of peace, the peace of religion, you realize that his face is carved out of joyous quietude. Its smooth surfaces are genial, untormented. The small eyes twinkle contentment. The nose juts out with jovial hilarity. Every gesture is an incitement to a cheerful acceptance of life. The strained mouth drawn tight as a bowstring seems to battle with an inner tide of laughter that surges for release. The man is an incarnation of optimism.

He preaches Christ as the clue to peace. Mankind thirsts for peace. All deep thinkers are shocked at their own discords. Ah, the anguish of the intellectual effort to attain the unattainable, to know the unknowable! Ah, the misery of philosophical speculation! Discord of the mind, discord of the passions, discord of the conscience. We pass our lives in a long agony, knowing hardly a day or an hour of real rest. This intensely compact little bullet of a man hurls himself into our despairs, our sterilities, our inanities. He buries himself in our distracted souls. Then he paints a miniature of St. Augustine, the mental traveller who found no peace in philosophy or in lust, but found it at last in Christ.

The sharp eloquence of the Preacher touches us to the quick. He speaks straight to our experience. There is nothing real but your conscience, and Christ is the only foundation on which conscience can rest, the human on the divine. Without some divine certainty, what a wreck, what a chaos, what an unmeaning and stupid world! The little eyes blaze with passion, the little body shakes with fervour. In his pathetic yearning to convince us he cites Lord Kelvin's sensational pronouncement that "science positively affirms creative power," and that "there is nothing between absolute scientific belief in creative power and the acceptance of the theory of a fortuitous concourse of atoms." It is strange that this stupendous declaration made on behalf of science by the greatest living scientist has not convulsed the world. For if God be a scientific reality, like gravitation, or like the conservation of energy, no man can neglect the one transcendent fact in life. "Every action of human free will is a miracle to physical and chemical and mathematical science."—"It is not in dead matter that we live and move and have our being, but in the creating and directive power which science compels us to accept as an article of belief." Thus speaks Lord Kelvin. Can we ignore this tremendous discovery, beside which the discovery of wireless telegraphy seems a bagatelle? The Preacher presents Christ as the clue to God, and Science approves the quest. There is sublimity in a conception that makes the little girls in white and blue and drab equal to "the Prince of Science." For in the search after God the man of science knows no more than the child.

XXVIII

DR. STANTON COIT

WHEN I began to gather these impressions of men in the pulpit, I determined to search for all sorts of men and all sorts of pulpits. In that search I have made a strange discovery. It is this. There are no atheists left. Atheism is dead. Formerly Rationalism was atheistic. To-day Rationalism is not atheistic. It is, in fact, religious. Some time ago I was invited to go to a "Religious Service" held every Sunday morning by the West London Ethical Society. The President of this Society was the late Sir Leslie Stephen. Now, one does not associate Sir Leslie Stephen with "Religious Services," so I resolved to see the "Religious Service" over which he presided. For Sir Leslie Stephen was a Prince of Rationalism as well as a Prince of Criticism. I knew that Rationalism had saturated Religion, but I did not know that Religion had saturated Rationalism.

So this Sunday morning to Kensington Town Hall I repair. The service begins at a quarter past eleven. The Hall is filled with a very intellectual audience. There are many charming girls who evidently do not fear that ethics will make them look plain. There are also ladies who look like George Eliot, and their metaphysical beauty is still more fascinating than the conventional type. Ladies like Mr. Henry James's "Belton Holbein," ladies with wonderful, old, tender, battered, blanched faces. "Bonté divine, mon cher—

que cette vieille est donc belle!" And Holbein men withal, wearing sharply personal faces, carved with character, keen, collisive, stubborn, isolated. Most of all do I rejoice in the choir. Cannot some Whistler or Sargent paint me those dishevelled groups tumbled round the little organ in orderly disorder? The clash of sexes and characters and ages is superb. And how squarely Dr. Stanton Coit sticks out of the group, bringing all its softer values into sharp relation to his hammered concentration of will and posture. The others are fluid: he is rock.

I feel morally braced by his face. It is a map of decision. He knows what he knows, and he knows what he does not know. He is as exact as Euclid. So geometrically accurate is the balance of his brain and heart that his face looks like an expensive chronometer. He has so much character that he is characterless. Character in a face is usually shown by the footprints of imperfections, the scars of internal battle. In this face the usual marks are absent. No perplexed wrinkles in the high-domed brow, no hedonism in the lips, no misery or hesitation in the eyes, but instead a polished tense alertness, a dynamic eagerness, a nervous thrust outwards of the whole nature. Passionate exteriority! A perfect mental machine that works without friction. A neat mind in a neat body in neat clothes. Everything neat, from the precise hair to the precisely-cropped and pointed beard, the precise nostrils, the precise moustache, the precise lips, the precise hands, the precise frock coat, the precise tie and the precise cuffs. Behold the Ethical Man!

The service is conducted by a voice. The voice is most skilfully worked by a blonde young man with a blonde young moustache curled *en croc*. He has the mien of an awakened somnambulist. His elocution is

excellent. Here is the ritual:—"Opening words. Canticle No. 326 in the Ethical Hymn-book. Declaration of Ethical Principles. A moment's Pause. Hymn No. 257. Reading. Selection, 'Persian Garden,' Lisa Lehman. Discourse. Anthem 105. Announcements. Hymn No. 144. Closing Words." Free Thought is now a religious religion. Here you have a Religious Creed, Religious Hymns, and Religious Preaching. "Ah," you say, "what about Prayer?" Well, what is the meaning of that "Moment's Pause"? The service is religious in spirit as well as in form. The old Free Thought was irreligious, in that it was derisive, insolent, intolerant, flippant. It was not a religion: it was a negligion. The new Free Thought is intensely religious. The Ethical Hymn-book is a noble anthology of spiritual poetry. When will Orthodoxy remove Poetry from its Index Expurgatorius?

Still more startling than the Religious Service is the Religious Sermon. It might have been preached at St. Paul's, or at the City Temple. The subject is "Mysticism and Religious Experience," and the Preacher pleads for more, not less, mysticism, for more, not less, religious experience. We must experiment with God. We must discover the deeper laws of the soul, just as Marconi discovered wireless telegraphy. Let us have laboratory work in the secret chambers of the spirit. Theologians have swung away from verbiage, and are making religious experience the point of attack. Let us collaborate with them. I confess that this thrills me. On the one hand, Science through Lord Kelvin affirms the absolute certainty of "a Creative and Directive Power." On the other hand, Rationalism meets Christianity halfway in the investigation of religious experience.

Dr. Coit's explanation of sin is essentially identical with that of thoughtful Christians. Sin is due to discontent with life, to a craving for reality, to a desire for a fresh experience, to curiosity, to a longing for a new sensation. Sin is seeking reality in the wrong way. In other words, sin is perverted mysticism. The essence of the passion for taking poison is the desire to reach reality. Men take nitrous oxide to solve the problems of religion. One young man took ether because he was angry at the injustice of the world. Commit yourself to the Right and you will find you have taken ether and more than ether. In this connexion, I may mention a curious fact that came to my knowledge some years ago. A young lady had undergone a serious operation. She was, of course, anæsthetized. After recovering consciousness she said she had made a great discovery. She was nervously anxious to tell it before she forgot. She declared she had seen "the Principle of Life." She could not describe it, for it was without substance or shape, but it was something whirling with incredible speed and all its parts were mingled in dazzling revolutions and involutions. The lady was absolutely ignorant of metaphysics or ethics or mysticism, but she was sure that for a moment she had caught a glimpse of the Secret, the Riddle, the Enigma of Existence. I tell the story for what it may be worth, only adding that I can vouch for its accuracy.

XXIX

REV. J. H. JOWETT

RECOGNITION Day at the City Temple. Recognition of whom. Of Reginald Campbell and his "Call" to wear the mantle of Joseph Parker. What a Call it has been! Even the "Call" of Parker, or of Spurgeon, was less sensational, less passionate, less clamant. There has seldom been so sudden a flight out of obscurity into the very furnace of fame. It is not a venerable father of the Church who preaches the Recognition Sermon. No, it is youth that recognizes youth. From Dr. Dale's old pulpit in Birmingham comes a trumpet blast of youth proclaiming that youth has captured Joseph Parker's old pulpit in London Town.

Mr. Jowett has a conventional face, and he wears two masks—a pendulous moustache and eye-glasses. But after a while I capture his central trait. He has the eyes of a wild mystic, far-piercing, swift, undeviating, with a light in them that flames and flashes, as if each flung glance buried itself in the very heart of reality. Behind these eyes the soul of the man is visibly at work with fiery fury, hurling all its passions and yearnings and dreams into the molten volley of eloquence that rushes out of his burning mouth. A small man made on a small scale. A small head, but a large heart. Although the head is small and the features are genially rounded, there is an underlying austerity. Note that hard downward ridge that runs to right and left from

nose to jaw. See, too, as he smiles, those creases like wrinkling granite. And the bony edge of the overhanging eyebrows, how sharply it is curved and carved above the caverns lit with torchlike eyes! The nose is eagerly cut in thin, keen, nervously acute lines. An American type of face, with no dead patches in it, no waste ground, all its features drawn tightly into finely-balanced energy. Practical, severely serious, no poseur, judgmatical, deliberate, not an extremist; no universalist in his interests, but rather a specialist with concentrated isolation of purpose. He is, indeed, the antithesis of Mr. Campbell, whose grey halo of undulant hair, clashing with his arched black eyebrows, crowns his romantic features with romance. He lacks the strange silent, dreamy Campbell charm, all his power being an active output of his spiritual ardour, a perpetual assault, a hardly-won conquest. In prayer he becomes transformed. You feel the projection of his personality towards the invisible mystery: an aura of mystical aspiration plays round his closed eyes and veils his face in a haze of rapture.

Ephesians iii. 8, "Unto me who am less than the least of all saints was this grace given, to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." A preacher on preaching! At once we see that it is to be a vast sermon, largely planned, for he puts up the scaffolding before he begins to build. (1) The Preacher, (2) the Preacher's Theme. He begins softly and simply, but soon the little frame seems to expand, the voice broadens and deepens, the gestures take great circling and sweeping flights, until the whole air trembles and vibrates with eddying passions of sound. He paints a portrait of Paul, and hangs it out with triumphant shouts. He glories in "the unsearchable riches of grace," likening it to the sea that washes the

world, filling every creek and cranny of earth's human shores. He astounds himself at the might of this mystery that destroys sin and transfigures sorrow. As he soars into higher heights of exulting exaltation his arms are flung up like the curving branches of an immense candelabra, his gesticulations grow in grandeur of defiance and appeal. He recites Paul's unprintable catalogue of nameless sins and indescribable sinners, and he bursts into a frenzy of pride in Paul's fearlessness and confidence. "And such were some of you." With his right arm stretched out in a magnificently heroic gesture, his whole body flung slantingly forth like a giant statue of appeal, his eyes blazing with rapt fury of desire—is it strange that we shrink, tremble, and recoil?

Then swiftly he turns to the new Preacher, and demands, "Do we speak with Paul's unshakable assurance?" And then he constructs an appalling hypothesis. "Suppose," he cries, "suppose we had here a company of men and women whose condition would justify us in placing them in Paul's catalogue, could we speak to them like Paul? Could they catch in our tones that accent of persuasion which is the only persuasive?" Then, for the second time, he recites the terrible catalogue, while gaily-dressed women and respectable men wince at the scourging words and cower before the stern glance of the Preacher's shattering eyes. Not often in a modern pulpit is sin so ruthlessly, so brutally, so directly defined and denounced, and the possibility of its destruction so resolutely affirmed.

After this ghastly descent into the sewers of vice, the Preacher rapidly turns to sweeter and gentler things. He proclaims Christ as the transfiguration of sorrow. With dramatic modulations of his fluent voice he

chants phrases from Paul's book of optimism. He even turns the doleful syllables of the sad word, "Sorrow," into cadences of joy. "We sorrow, we sor-row, we sor-ro-o-ow . . .," he cries, with an ecstatic rising inflection on the second syllable that changes the meaning of the word, and transforms it into a synonym of joy. This, I think, is the most wonderful exploit in a sermon full of inspired eloquence. It is a very daring feat, for in order to accomplish it the Preacher is forced not only to intone, but actually to sing. Indeed, a great part of Mr. Jowett's oratory is pure, dramatic recitative, and his splendid voice ranges over the whole scale like the voice of a De Reszke or a Tamagno in opera. Mr. Yeats has been teaching us to sing poetry. Here is an orator who sings in the pulpit. Indeed, he often drops into blank verse :

"Earth has no sorrow that Heaven cannot heal."

One delightful characteristic is his rich fertility of allusion and illustration, symbol and simile. He tells an anecdote with pungent humour, but his anecdotes are always apt and apposite. He knows the use of reiteration. Over and over again he declaims his text, and when he wishes to contrast Paul's personal humility with Paul's ambassadorial pride, he murmurs in tearful, trembling, pain-tortured tones, "Unto me who am less than the least," and then violently changing his voice, he thunders in strong, plangent, masculine notes, "was this grace given." His skill in oratorical counterpoint is superb, recalling Dr. Parker's mastery of verbal music. And most artfully he leads up to the winsome tenderness of his recognition. Turning with almost maternal wistfulness to the still figure on his left, he declares : "We all recognize that the Holy Father has made Mr. Campbell the temple of the Holy Spirit. The perfume of the

Master's presence in him is felt by us all. Into this vast, lonely city he has come. My brother, I pray that the good hand of God may be upon you!" So, on this yearning chord of deep, sweet, solemnity of fraternal love he ends, while the hushed air seems to throb with awe. Tremulous, with fingers twitching, his lips dry with nervous tension, his mysterious eyes filled with strange vision, in a low voice shaken with sharp emotion, the slim, aerial, unearthly stripling simply thanks his friend. "I loved him before. I love him more now. Humbly I promise in the presence of this people I will obey the charge given by my brother." And so in a beautiful hush of serene reverence and sincere solemnity this memorable Recognition is accomplished.

XXX

MONSIGNOR CROKE ROBINSON

IT is easy to find the comedy in religion, but it is not so easy to find the pathos in it. The pathos in religion is most easily found in obscure byways. There is pathos in Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's, in the Oratory and the City Temple, but it does not lie so near the surface as it lies in the little suburban conventicle or chapel, where life pushes its bones through the skin. This Sunday morning I journey from Kensington Gardens to Kentish Town, from the fairy-land of "the little white bird" to the weary land of the little grey bird. I mount on an omnibus at the Royal Oak, and wind through miles of sorrowful streets, through mouldy Praed Street and Chapel Street, along the mournful decay of the Marylebone Road, to that dolorous whirlpool where four torrents of traffic clash and roar, Euston Road colliding with Marylebone Road, Hampstead Road hurling itself against Tottenham Court Road. Most melancholy is this meeting of these great waters of Metropolitan life. To me it seems as if all the titanic squalor of London here utters itself in one immense sigh, one immeasurable groan. Along the heavy fortitude of the Hampstead Road the tramcar crawls, then it turns reluctantly into the deep disconsolations of Fortess Road; and there in the sad heart of Kentish Town I find Our Lady Help of Christians. The little chapel looks like a warehouse made of fog, but its name is a valiant defiance flung at

its environment. Here for many Sundays one of the most famous Catholic preachers has been proclaiming the Catholic faith.

Inside the chapel the drab monotony of London is triumphantly assaulted. The altar is a splash of happy colour, and the vestments of the three celebrants blow a loud blast of golden joy. The fragrance of incense, the gleam of silver chains, the sonorous Latin syllables chanted by a young priest in a mellow Hibernian brogue, the exquisite singing of the tiny choirette—all these things are sharply antagonistic to the flat realism of Kentish Town. They spray its dejections and abjections with mystery and romance. And as I glance at the crowded rows of kneeling worshippers the terrible pathos of existence stabs me to the heart. It is wonderful to see these human beings reaching out towards the intangible, the invisible, the insoluble, the unknown; casting aside the commonplace for a moment, and plunging into the sea of spiritual fantasy. By-and-by there is a pause in the ritual, and along the aisle comes a little procession. It is the Preacher. A huge man, built on a massive scale. His head is magnificently immense. It reminds one of those vast piles of granite that the sea has carved into a giant effigy. The brow is a beetling precipice, the nose is a plunging promontory, the cheeks are slopes of winter-bitten rock, the mouth is a cloven chasm, the jaw is a mountain ridge. The voice that issues from this rugged rock-face is harshly deep, like the boom and thud of waves on a tortured coast. A great, rough, Gargantuan personality, genially uncouth, jovially masterful, trampling like an elephant over the *nuances* and subtleties of mood and thought, grimly forceful, exuberantly direct. The man looks as if he could laugh tremendously in thunder-claps of physical explosion.

John ii. 3, "The mother of Jesus saith unto Him, They have no wine." It is the Feast Day of the little church, and the Preacher sets himself to show that the invocation of Our Lady Help of Christians is Scriptural. He holds that the Catholic Church alone is Scriptural, and proceeds to build up a very powerful argument, the strength of which consists in a rigidly literal acceptance of plenary inspiration. It was the Mother who saw that the supply of wine at the Cana wedding feast had run short. It was the Mother who asked Jesus to intervene. But Jesus says, "Lady, what is that to thee and me." Here the Preacher turns to argue with his "non-Catholic friends." Is not that a rebuke? No, Jesus is entering on a new epoch in His ministry, and he shows that He is not bound to obey His mother. Then, quickly changing ground, the Preacher says he will grant that it is a rebuke, and points out that the Mother's "prayer of suggestion" is successful. This mysterious passage, therefore, supports the Catholic position. It means: "Lady, I did not intend to work miracles, 'my hour is not yet come,' but as you ask me, I do so." Therefore Our Lady is the Help of Christians, *Auxilium Christianorum*. But why not go straight to God and to Christ? "I say, go. Has any Catholic ever been forbidden to go straight to Christ? No, but he has had a good many penances for not going straight to Christ"; and, with a humorous twinkle in his eye, he growls, "You all know that." Then he cites the case of Moses. God actually said to Moses: "I wish you would not intercede for the people, because I wish to destroy them. The prayer of Moses actually stood in the way of God." Enormous is the power of prayer. Remarkable is this Catholic Preacher's absolute reliance on naked faith. "Good Catholics are not afraid of believing too much. If you believe too much,

God will forgive you. If you believe too little, what then? I'd rather be credulous than sceptical." This is, of course, the secret of Catholicism. It opens no door to rationalism.

From Scripture the Preacher passes to History. In the seventh century the Crescent nearly overcame the Cross, but the Church prayed to Our Lady, and Charles Martel hammered the Moslems to pieces at the battle of Tours. (The Preacher does not say that the Church subsequently damned the saviour of Christendom, and that "a saint of the time was indulged with a pleasant vision of the soul and body of Charles Martel, burning, to all eternity, in the abyss of hell.") Again, Pius V. prayed, and there came a light from heaven. At that moment the Christian fleet vanquished the Turks. Then it was that the Holy Father instituted this great feast of Our Lady Help of Christians. These ancient proofs of the efficacy of prayer to Our Lady Help of Christians are capped by a modern instance. Napoleon, one of the greatest in the order of Nature and one of the wickedest in the order of grace, sent Pius VII. into exile like Athanasius of old. When the Holy Father remonstrated, Napoleon said, "Do you think any threat of the Church can make the muskets drop from the hands of my soldiers?" Pius had recourse to the *Auxilium Christianorum*. What happened? Napoleon's brain was addled. He launched his army against the snows of Russia. During the disastrous retreat from Moscow, the muskets fell from the benumbed hands of his soldiers.

From these miraculous answers to prayer, the Preacher passes to a fervent eulogy of the Catholic Church as "a great praying machine." Everybody prays for everybody else. The saints in heaven pray. The souls in Purgatory cannot pray for themselves, but

they pray for us. We pray for them and for one another. The value of prayer depends on the sanctity of the person who prays. "Abraham had more power than you or I, because he was a good deal holier. The power of Our Blessed Lady is omnipotence. What can God deny her? All Catholic theologians agree that devotion to the Mother of God means devotion to orthodoxy, the truth in dogma. She is the keystone of the Church in Christian dogma. Make her only the Mother of Christ, as Nestorius, that arch-heretic, did, as all outside the Church do, and the keystone falls away. If we have devotion to her we are omnipotent with God. But our prayers are not answered at once? Why? The Preacher smiles. "I will tell you a little secret. God does not answer at once, because he wants us to go on praying. If we got a prompt answer to our prayers"—he sniffs a scornful Heh! and snaps his fingers—"why, we'd think nothing of it!" The full eyelids are creased and wrinkled with humour, the great uplands of the cheeks roll into ridges and furrows of fun, and the jolly concentric rings in the series of double chins deepen with broad hilarity. Everybody smiles. Everybody twinkles. And as the sermon ends I think of the Curé of Meudon.

FATHER IGNATIUS

"YES," murmurs the Cynic, "let us go to hear Father Ignatius. He is in season, like asparagus, opera, and Jane Hading. After we have heard his 'Oration to Society,' we can take a turn in the park. It is not a far cry from the saint in Baker Street to the sinners at Church parade." "Good," I reply, "and you will record your impressions?" "Beside yours?" "As you please!" So at eleven o'clock we find ourselves at the Portman Rooms. In the vestibule we encounter a black-robed attendant. "Rather clever," whispers the Cynic; "strikes the monastic note on the threshold." Another brother meets us at the closed doors, and asks, 'Free seats or reserved?' "I'm," says the Cynic, glancing at the handbills, "London Season: Sympathetic Addresses to the Upper Ten.—Reserved Sitings, 5s., 2s. 6d. and Unreserved 1s., a few free." Then he whispers "Press," and we are courteously ushered into one of the front rows of plush-covered seats. The audience is composed mainly of women, mostly well-dressed. There is a sprinkling of men, but Society is carefully absent. I look in vain for Mrs. George Thingumy, Mrs. Willie Dash, Mrs. Arthur Blank, or Lady Carl Paragraph. There is not one marabout boa coiled round a fair back, not one chiffon necklace knotted about an ivory throat. "Perhaps Society fears this modern Savonarola!" The Cynic's lips curl. "Well,

say Bossuet." "Bosh," he mutters; "Blougram is nearer the mark." "Don't be too hard on him," I plead. "On whom? On Blougram?" is the low *riposte*.

On the dais a small American organ, flanked by a round table. At the organ a jolly monk, trolling out the Church Service, his deep, gurgling voice followed by a ragged string of quavering feminine notes. The good man is both organist and choir. His versatility surpasses that of the Society entertainer. The exploits of a Corney Grain or a George Grossmith pale before his astounding triplication of parts—Organist, Choir, and Preacher in one. Into each *rôle* he flings exuberant energy, dramatic unction, plastic fervour. Every limb, every muscle, every nerve are brought into play. While his feet are manipulating the pedals, while his fingers are roaming up and down the keyboard, while his voice is booming out the phrases of anthem or hymn, his features are cinematographic dramatizations. Now he throws back his head, with closed eyes; now he smiles; now he nods; now he leans in sidelong appeal; now he is stern in every wrinkle. Yes, a marvellous histrion, a splendid mime, every inch of his body strung and tuned for the interpretation of emotion and mood, every line of his limbs an instrument of utterance.

The Middle Ages in Baker Street! It is no paradox, but sober verity. This Monk of Llanthony is at least nine hundred years old. He is an illuminated missal, a gorgeous breviary, a slab of medieval romance. He incarnates the rotund joviality of those chanting friars who make so brave a show on the boards of history. He is a daring plagiarist. Here in the heart of modernity he has turned himself into a living and breathing symbol of monasticism. His very garb is a

shout from the dim past. Around his genial jowl rises the black hood that sets the imagination galloping back to sweet St. Francis of Assisi, to St. Thomas à Kempis, to Loyola, to Luther, to Papal Bulls and Indulgences, to flagellations, to dark cells, to hair shirts, to refectories, to the rack and thumbscrew, to dungeons and bonfires, to scholiasts and mages, to crusaders and inquisitors, and whatsoever words there be that throb with mystery and cruelty, learning and occultism, fanaticism and faith.

And how medieval is his face! Its Rabelaisian contours are uncontemporary. It would look well over a Latin parchment, or a venison pasty, or a carp-pond. The flesh has the true medieval tint, a rich, mellow yellow, glistening with good humour, and its folds and creases cry out for a background of fat glebe and teeming tilth, grey abbey arches and worn cloister stones. All the architecture of his jolly countenance is carved in deep content and solid quiet. The eyes are meant to look out over lush meadows and well-stocked cellars, and their heavy pouched under-lids are remotely aloof from the lean unrest of our feverish time. Surely it is no Sheffield razor that achieves that wonderful gleam on the broad cheeks and massive chin and well-rounded skull, with its tonsured halo of silver hair. And the sumptuous smile on the benignly tolerant lips, can its ripe complacency be gleaned from the tawdry riot of modern life? And the generously imperturbable throat, is it not made for deep draughts of wine monastic, matured by suns more jovial than any modern vineyard knows? And those blithe eyebrows, shooting up into an unfurrowed brow, were they not grown under a comfortable cowl woven on lazy looms? Yes, "The Monk of Llanthony" is a relic of rushlight and arras days.

What of the sermon? It is a hilarious fragment of medieval laughter. The theme is quaintly antique: Balaam's Ass. The Monk proposes to preach nine sermons on that medieval text. Thrice on three Sundays he means to illuminate it. "The Grandeur of Balaam's Ass."—"The Consolations of Balaam's Ass."—"Balaam the Fashionable Clergyman and His Ass."—"What Balaam's Ass Said and Did."—"The Benediction of Balaam's Ass: 'Society' Astonished."—" 'Society' Furious at Baalam's Ass."—"Society's Waste of Money, &c., to Silence the Voice of the Ass."—"The Fury of the Evil Powers at Balaam's Ass for Daring to Speak." "Concluding Address on the Glorious Triumphs of Balaam's Ass: Their Consequences to Us." Could anything be more medieval in temper, in humour, in flavour? And how triumphantly medieval is his absolute acceptance of the story! He boldly affirms that the truth of the fable is established by the New Testament, and by all the Christian Churches—by St. Paul's in London, by St. Peter's in Rome, by St. Isaac's in Moscow, by St. Stephen's in Vienna. All Christendom is responsible for the truth of the fact that Balaam's Ass spoke. It is as much a part of the Christian religion as the fact that there is a God!

The sermon is one long, scornful repudiation of modernity. Standing in his black robes, with his knotted girdle dangling by his side, with his great black sleeves outstretched in an immense gesture of defiance, the Monk pours contempt on modern science and its puny fumblings, its solemn investigations into the habits of earthworms, its manifold contradictions. He airily declares that the Bible is the only scientific book in the world. He believes that the sun stood still on Ajalon, and that the fact of its having stood still is

proof irrefutable of its motion round the earth. Medieval courage! He is a scientific sceptic, and a credulous mystic. He believes in Satan, in angels, in devils, in a material hell with real flames and fire. They have real ghosts at Llanthony Abbey. A ghostly monk regularly appears there to the real monks and the corporeal nuns. The Preacher turns round and speaks colloquially to the spirits of dead Ignatians, who are floating in the air of Portman Rooms. It is the Middle Ages come to life again!

And how can I describe the posturings, the genuflections, the gesticulations, the attitudinizings of this modern anachronism? He is deliriously devoid of self-consciousness. How utter is his abandonment to physical eloquence! The Cynic is now a study in mental nausea. "Charlatan, mountebank, humbug, oleaginous impostor, greasy hypocrite"—these are the words he mutters and growls. But, later, as we jostle our way through the chiffons and feathers of the Park, I rebuke his malice. "Blougram," he sniffs. "My friend," I retort, "there is a bit of Blougram in us all!"

XXXII

REV. F. B. MEYER

HOSPITAL Sunday. Rain. London is one vast sponge. At every corner stand bedraggled ladies with forlorn collecting-boxes. The streets are desolate. Few are the adventurous pedestrians who brave the pneumoniactal horrors of an English June. The sodden loafers loaf on Westminster Bridge, gazing dolefully down at the Stygian Thames. One butt-end of humanity, humped in damp misery, calls to another butt-end who shambles by: "Any good?" The butt-end raises his hands, and drops them against his dripping rags in an eloquent gesture of bitter disgust. What mystery of hope the question conceals I cannot guess. Everybody is dismally moist. The 'bus horses alone maintain their stolid indifference. The Thames is a symphony of Acheronian gloom. Its swirling flood is crusted with patches of sluggish slime. The bridges peer like phantoms through the grey vapours. The barges huddle together in the leprous mud, wrapping their dark sails in a convulsive shudder round their masts. The soaring towers of Westminster seem to melt into the dank mists. Their broken tracery is blurred against the backcloth of dingy rain. In an hour they will be faded exhalations. Even the cry of Big Ben is muffled by the heavy shroud of wet air that hangs round his head. Hospital Sunday. Ay me, London is very sick to-day, and the coppers in the collecting-boxes rattle woefully in our ears.

So, through the city of tears, I wander until I find Christ Church, in the Westminster Bridge Road. The lovely interior makes me rub my eyes. Is it an Anglican edifice? This Congregational Church vies with its State rivals in splendour of line and colour. The stained glass windows shut out the moist misery of the London summer. The arches spring in joyous curves. And the Liturgy is the Liturgy of the Book of Common Prayer. There is even a faint echo of the sonorous intoning you hear in the Established Churches, and the stalwart, keen-eyed young curate in his white surplice declaims the beautiful phrases in rotund tones that would chime with the reverberating echoes of the neighbouring Abbey. It is true that there are fine shades of variation. In the prayer for the royal family, the President of the United States of America finds a place. (Why not the President of the French Republic, the Kaiser, the Emperor of Austria, and the King of Italy? Why not Prince Karageorgevitch, the Sultan Rouge, and the Red Tsar?)

The minister of this noble Congregational Church is a saintly figure. His fine face is a spiritual landscape on which the eye dwells with delight. Life the sculptor has made this piece of his handiwork into a calm and serene poetry of contour. He has wrought the surface of the skin into a delicate harmony, the splendid forehead losing its faint ivory pallor in the soft halo of benignant silver hair. In the lower part of the face the blood flushes the polished surfaces with a faint glow. But the dominant tint of the skin is remote from carnal energy and tumult, its ascetic colourlessness empty of animalism. The head is nearly all brow, and the brow is knotted over the brooding eyebrows into a mildly violent intensity of contemplative passion. The dark eyes are curiously alive with a startled timidity in

their gaze, as if the inner mystery were more accustomed to use them for looking in than for looking out. The lips are as sweet and as tender as a woman's, and they close on each other with that complete spiritual precision which is oftener seen in a woman's mouth than in a man's. There are reminiscences of anguish and struggle in the deep slanting trenches that plunge almost parallel on either side of the strong nose and the firm mouth. The chin is softly and compassionately round and small. Altogether it is the face of a man worn fine by exalted aspirations and holy ardours. Its expression is persuasively gentle, with a delicately feminine wistfulness. It sets one musing over the fallacy of sex, for assuredly in all deep and lofty essentials the noble man resembles the noble woman, and the noble woman resembles the noble man. How well this masculine countenance would look under the white headgear of a nun!

It is Hospital Sunday here as well as in the outer rain, and the tender spirit of the minister of Christ Church utters itself in an eloquent plea for these great houses of pain. But he distinguishes sharply between the hospitals which permit their doctors to torture dumb animals and those which are free from the taint of vivisection. Speaking to the children, he denounces those institutions which combine the heavenly work of healing with the hellish work of torment. He declares that the offerings of Christ Church will not be given to the Hospital Fund, but solely and exclusively to those hospitals which are guiltless with regard to our dumb brethren. The dogs, the rabbits, the cats, the birds, he recognizes, like St. Francis of Assisi, as our little brothers and sisters. In his prayer he prays that the pity of Christ may come upon men of science and prevent them from sinning against the animals which

God has given to us in trust. As he ceases, there rises from the congregation a chorus of passionate amens. If every London pulpit spoke with the clear voice of the pulpit of Christ Church, vivisection would be swept out of the London hospitals to-morrow. Unfortunately, the Churches are strangely indifferent to the sufferings of animals. A terrible responsibility lies on those ministers of religion who induce their people to give money to hospitals which use a portion of it, not in curing, but in causing pain.

The sermon is a rapturous eulogy of Christ as the grand antagonist of agony. Matthew iv. 23, "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people." The voice of the preacher is mellifluously plaintive, vibrating with plangent mournfulness, and full of minor chords. The modulations are low and fastidiously refined, and the sibilants are pleasantly stressed by a musical lisp. There is a perpetual noise of tears in these silver tones, a tremulous sound of pity and tolerance, sympathy and compassion. His gestures are reticently gentle, moving in slow curves and arrested rhythms of appeal, the thin, pale, nervous, white hands uplifted high above the head, or held tentatively parallel, or softly swayed in delicate entreaty. The argument is lucidly marshalled, the phrasing simple, and the imagery peaceful and pastoral, like an English valley washed with sunlight. The whole man breathes spiritual air, and his reluctant smile is sweet with gentle purity of intellect and soul. Indeed, the power of his fragrant personality is persuasive, filling his speech with high and hallowed meanings. A Christlike Christian, he gives forth an odour of sweet and serene sincerity.

XXXIII

DR. WASHINGTON SULLIVAN

FOR nearly nine months I have been wandering in the London labyrinth of religions, and yet I have not exhausted the inexhaustible variety of its sects and creeds, personalities and temperaments. Every week I receive letters from readers who desire me to include in this series of impressions their favourite preacher. But it is impossible to sit in forty churches at once, and I must beg my kind friends to bear with my inubiquity. It was in response to many solicitations that I went to hear Dr. Washington Sullivan, the orator of the Ethical Religion Society, who attracts every Sunday morning a cultured and cosmopolitan crowd to Steinway Hall. It is curious to note the tendency of free thought towards positivism and away from negationism. The era of destructive atheism and iconoclastic scepticism seems to have quietly died, without any public announcement. Where is the old Bradlaughism? There are no Bradlaughs to-day. Their place is taken by tolerant intellectuals, who try to build up an ethical religion rather than to destroy the creeds in which they have ceased to believe. The consequence is that many thoughtful minds, which would be repelled by the old derisive atheism, are drawn from the doors of religious orthodoxy to the doors of ethical heterodoxy.

Dr. Washington Sullivan has a very poignant personality. As he stands up, lean, slim, erect, tense as a

mainspring, you feel that he has got a fierce grip on his own individuality, and that his will is lithe and hard as tempered steel. This concentration of personality is rare. As a rule human beings are "all over the place," if I may use an expressive vulgarism. They fire off their egoism in small shot, not in bullets. It is good to see a man who gathers all his internal mystery into one projectile, and hurls it straight and fast into the internal mystery of his neighbours. Dr. Sullivan is a very modern gun. His firing practice is good, and he hits the target often. He may be right or he may be wrong, but he is sincere. He has clear views and trenchant convictions. His logic is not a mere gymnastic display, but a passionate revelation of his processes of thought.

The man from head to foot is as sharp and keen as a hollow-ground razor. He is all edge. His face is a fury of incision with no sentiment, no pity, no tenderness in its knife-like features. It is a mask of intellectual relentlessness and metaphysical ferocity. Its pitilessly frigid expression makes my blood run cold. What a terrible judge he would be! As I sit trembling before this man of steel who wields words like whips, I feel like a convicted felon. His eyes of ice make me shiver. Between his thin compressed lips the bitter phrases hiss like frozen fire, like fiery hail. Other orators cultivate the art of being agreeable. He cultivates the art of being disagreeable. His tongue is tipped with irony, cold, deadly, and poisonous. He stands with his face in profile so as to let all its points stab and all its edges cut. I catch myself yearning for a glimpse of his full face. But no! He never turns from his sidelong posture, never varies his oblique glance. Perhaps the right side of his face is tenderer, sweeter, kindlier, gentler than the left. Who knows?

There are intellectual machines which weigh out arguments as the machines at the Mint weigh out sovereigns. This is one of them. It works faultlessly. It never hesitates over a doubtful coin, but with swift rigour separates the light gold from the rest. And the outer surfaces of the man symbolize the balanced mechanism of his soul. The very wrinkles on his brow are ruled as straight as lines of music in thin, sharp, unwavering parallels. His clothes are like a proposition in Euclid. His frock coat is made of right angles, and his collar is a Q.E.D.

His voice is quite free from the quality of mercy. It is as passionless as moon-lit ice. The slow, remorseless march of its elocution arouses in me a wild longing to break loose, to shout, to dance a cake-walk, or in some way to demonstrate the joy of being illogical. But the steely glitter of this merciless rhetorician's eye holds me fast in sweating terror. When he compresses his eyelids and spears us with a menacing glance, I abandon all hope of flight. His long, lean, white forefinger is thrust right into my crumbling courage. That piercing curve in his nostrils cuts through my nerves like a scimitar. No, I am lost. For ever and for ever I shall sit here with these my fellow-criminals, like the party in the parlour, "all silent and all damned." We can never escape. We have fallen into these whirling compound engines of eloquence, and we can never go forth alive.

The theme that arouses this volcanic iceberg is Zola, and Zola's last book, *La Vérité*. I do not wonder, for Zola was another such personality. Zola was perhaps the greatest volcanic iceberg ever produced by French logic. His passion for abstract truth led him into strange hells as well as strange heavens. Dr. Sullivan glories in him as the ethical saint of the world. I have

heard many tributes to Zola's pitiless lust after truth, but none so noble, none so lofty, none so exalted as this. There is some refuge for human frailty in the conception of a just but merciful God, but there is no refuge, no shelter, in the conception of merciless human justice. For Zola, as this man paints him, is as implacable as the annihilating fire of Vesuvius. He is a symbol of that unappeasable judge who sits in eternal and solitary session in every soul, the judge whose sentence is absolute, whose condemnation is irrevocable. This is surely the most intolerable thought in existence, the certainty that, whatever may be the mercy of God, there is no mercy in ourselves. So long as we exist before or after death our consciousness will pronounce unaltering sentence on our sins. God may forgive. Man may forgive. But we can never forgive ourselves.

It is to that spectre that this man points, as he tells the thrice-told tale of Dreyfus, as he scourges the priests and Jesuits who (in his view) are the curse of France. He draws up a terrible indictment against Continental Catholicism. He affirms that Latin Europe is being suffocated in the close atmosphere of medieval thought. The Church has an astonishing hold on women, and the State is demoralized in consequence by the neglect of their higher education. There is no hope of escape from immorality except in the higher education of woman followed by her economic independence. Woman imperfectly educated is the ready slave and enslaver of man. The Roman Catholic Church does nothing for the higher education of women. Its highest ideal for her is the convent prison. He tells how hundreds of starving orphan children were forced to work for fifteen hours a day in a convent at Nancy. These houses of religion are

sweating dens. The head of one of them was convicted in a French law court and fined 10,000 frs. Politically, these houses have been hotbeds of anti-republican intrigue. The French Government is hounding them down, and it must hound them down. It has been wonderfully patient. In England they would not have been tolerated so long. What shrift would Roman Catholic priests get here if they conspired to restore the Stuarts?

He challenges Mr. W. S. Lilly to say whether he would like to see England embracing Roman Catholicism as it is to-day. Any reversion to Catholicism would be an indication that England's day is done. And so this merciless logician absolutely endorses the determination of French Republicans to extirpate Clericalism without pity. But I wish he would show us the right side of his face.

XXXIV

ARCHDEACON SINCLAIR

IT is pleasant to step out of the torrid into the temperate zone, out of St. Paul's Churchyard into St. Paul's Cathedral. I do not know how many of the large congregation have come in search of coolness, but doubtless it is not by chance that the seats near the doors are filled with what Charles Lamb (in one of those lost "Lepus" papers which Mr. Lucas has discovered) calls "a hot huddle of humanity." These good folk are out of range so far as the preacher is concerned. His voice reaches them in the form of a dishevelled echo, cold with reverberation among cool spaces. The clear, passionless treble of the choir boys soothes and solaces ears tortured by sultry clamour of myriad omnibuses. The organ melts into a drowsy murmur as of indolent surf. The fierce sunlight is sifted into a shadowy twilit slumber. The grey heights and depths of arch and pillar soothe tired eyelids and tired eyes. Is it strange that the congregation inverts itself? The nearer the pulpit the fewer, the nearer the door the more. Ah, it is good to hear Archdeacon Sinclair, but it is also good to rest eye and ear, nerve and limb, in this great grey paradise of cool, colourless, soundless quietude. But perhaps I do wrong to proclaim its charm, for if all London came to bathe in this bath of peace, its magical beatitude would be shattered. Let us keep our semi-solitude

our isolated palace of perpetual indolence and aerial ease.

I am not sure that the drowsy fringe of the congregation choose the worse part. Distance sometimes lends enchantment to a sermon: the Voice of the Preacher is so sonorous that it gains by travel. We have Songs Without Words: why not Sermons Without Words? It is almost a pity to clog these rolling thunders with platitude? As the deep notes emerge from the fetters of phrase and swing in great curves of sound through the stone silences, one imagines they are heavy with spiritual mystery and supernatural secrets. But under the sharp shadow of the pulpit they strike our sense before they are etherealized, cowering our imagination, and saddening our soul with empty monotony. The truth is, we are too exacting, too fastidious. We expect eloquence in the pulpit of St. Paul's. We expect fresh thoughts in fresh words. We expect transmutations of the theological jargon that has ceased to convey its original import to our mind. We expect syllables struck like sparks from the flint of personal experience. We are unreasonable. Not unto every man is it given to utter in living forms the living tumult of his soul.

And yet the Preacher provokes our foolish anticipations. His physique is superb. As he stands in the choir, his giant stature imposes itself on our regard. His splendid head, crowned with careless waves of iron-grey hair, is grandly poised on his broad shoulders, and his outstretched hand leaning on the fluted column defines the large fluency of his posture. His features are carved into great generous curves and angles on a scale that harmonizes with the immense cathedral spaces. The deep solid jaw, the salient outleap of the nose, the sweeping lines of the lips, the promontory

chin, the square granite brow—all are planned for depth and distance, for pomp and dignity. And as this magnificent presence sweeps across the choir and ascends the stone stairs that lead to the pulpit, one thrills with reverent surmise and respectful curiosity. He looks every inch an orator.

But as he perches his spectacles on his nose and peers down at his manuscript a shock of disillusion disturbs our eager presage. A read sermon! But as the rolling thunder of the voice booms out from beneath the sounding-board our dread is assuaged, and for a while we listen entranced to the dark surge of heavy vocables, crashing sonorously against the vibrating air, and awakening a hundred echoes in a hundred corners. Other voices dwindle and die in these illimitable spaces, but this voice masters all their emptiness and thrills all their vacant silence. There is no stress or strain, no effort or endeavour, in its deep, rotund tones. It transmits the flying splendours of sound with the controlled ease of the cathedral organ. What a voice! I have heard none like it in all my pulpiteering. A godlike presence and a godlike voice. If only to these gifts were added the gift of godlike eloquence!

But, alas! it is a voice and nothing more. The secret of eloquence is the union of expression with impression. It is not enough to be sincere: you must also seem sincere. You must saturate what you give out with what you do not give out. Your words must be laden with that indefinable mystery which we call personality. Now many preachers have a detached voice, a voice which is insulated against the spiritual electricity of the brain that works it. If the brain is powerful, putting its processes into vivid phrase, one does not miss the throb and thrill of personality so acutely, so painfully. But where the brain is not

powerful, and its impulses are the ordinary impulses of the ordinary man, one yearns for the electric shock of personal feeling. And that is what one fails to find in this splendid voice issuing from this splendid presence. All the thoughts are unimpeachable, but they are expressed in venerable platitudes and outworn pulpitese. Each sentence begins and continues and ends in foreseen and familiar stereotypical commonplace. The voice is the voice of a somnambulist chanting immemorial phrases, with strenuously irrelevant stresses, and resonantly factitious emphasis. And the vague thrust of personal emotion begets a corresponding vagueness of idea. The outlines of thought are blurred, running into grandiose abstractions and declamatory pleonasms. The epithets are either otiose or incongruous, and one wonders at such phrases as "the blue and awful depths of eternity," asking why the depths of eternity are "blue" and not red, or white, or yellow, or black, or grey. Everything becomes a dim abstraction as the sermon meanders through a waste of generalities; and the catalogue of abstract sins fails to appal or repel as completely as the catalogue of abstract virtues fails to allure or inspire. Even the divine attributes are generalized into nebulous negation. "He is the God of the Sermon on the Mount, the God of help and pity, the God of blessings, the God of the most lofty justice, the God of the most tender sympathy and condescension." All this is from the point of view of the man who cannot quicken generalities with personal experience. I am sure there are many here whose soul can suffuse the vaguest abstraction with living ecstasy. But the Preacher ought also to preach for the soul that has not learned the language of religion.

REV. JOHN M. ROBERTSON

“SOUTH Place Chapel—Rev. John M. Robertson. ‘Lord Kelvin on Providence.’” This sensational announcement catches my eye as I look down the list of preachers. Who is the Reverend John M. Robertson? Mr. John M. Robertson I know, not only as the intellectual leader of English Rationalism, but also as an acute critic of literary, political, and sociological tendencies. He is one of those many-minded men who touch life at so many points that their mental equipment seems almost encyclopædic. Has he, I wonder, turned clergyman? If so, who ordained him? Whence does he derive his title of “Reverend”? Has the South Place Ethical Society resolved to push still farther its imitation of religious ceremonial, and to call its lectures by the pastoral name? Or is it a stroke of delicate irony? Is it an assertion of the inborn right of every man to the appellation of “Reverend”? Is it a protest against the assumption that any sect can confer that honourable affix on its champions?

Revolving these speculations I make my way to Finsbury, and set foot for the first time in the Mecca of English Free Thought. It is a real chapel with a real religious façade, real religious columns, real religious pews, a real religious pulpit, a real religious organ, a real religious choir, real religious hymns and anthems. “The object of the Society,” I read, “is

the cultivation of a rational religious sentiment." As I sit in my comfortably-cushioned pew, listening to Mendelssohn's "O for the wings of a dove," I ponder over that phrase, "a rational religious sentiment," and I ask myself: Can Religion be rational? Can Rationalism be religious? Are not these things contradictory? Further, what has reason to do with "sentiment"? What has sentiment to do with reason? Would it not be as sensible to talk of an algebraic religious sentiment as to talk of "a rational religious sentiment"?

As I study the Reverend John M. Robertson I seem to see a living incarnation of reason minus sentiment, an embodiment of synthetic philosophy. I daresay he has red blood in his veins, but his physical organization is composed of two colours, black and white. Dead black and dead white. Black hair, black moustache, black beard, black eyebrows, black eyes, against a background of white forehead, white nose, white cheeks, white ears. Stay, there is a thin thread of scarlet underlip that clashes fiercely with its black and white environment, a clamant incongruity of colour proclaiming the insurrection of the blood against the cold print of passionless reason. And there is a wild gleam in the darting fire of the restless eyes that betrays an unconquerable mystery lurking behind the grey matter of the brain. In these eyes is concentrated the fascination of this poignant personality. They are bright with an ironic humour that resists the cold discipline of intellect. They are pointed with an incandescent candour which glows and glitters like a burning glass made of ice. They blaze with the central egoism of a fanatic. Can rationalism breed a fanatic? Yes. This man is a fanatic for truth. His emotions are the martyrs of his brain. Twist his

temperament a little awry and he would be a religious bigot. In other times, one could conceive him as a zealot who would go to the stake or send others to the stake in defence of an idea. He is like the calmly ferocious logicians of the French Revolution.

All his features are moulded in those softly sharp contours which mark the predominance of the brain over the feelings. You may see the same cutting gentleness in the face of Mr. Healy. More dreadful is this mild ferocity than mere physical truculence, for the implacable brain is far more fearworthy than the remorseless blood. You may see this meek mercilessness in the face of philosophic anarchists and socialists like Prince Kropotkin and Mr. Bernard Shaw. It makes me tremble lest humanity should ever be dominated by reason, lest a day should dawn when justice should not be tempered with mercy, and life should be made intolerable by consistency. It would be awful to live in a world where brain and blood should be adjusted in the flawless harmony of a chronometer. It would be maddening to live in a cosmos made of John M. Robertsons, for one would be merely a factor in a surd, a cipher in a differential calculus. As the mathematicization of humanity is still a long way off, it is possible to contemplate the mathematical man with respectful wonder. Many are the marvellous feats of men, but surely this is the most marvellous of all—a man who can make himself into a mental machine that works without friction and without deviation, an intellectual linotype that sets up ideas without breaking down.

Happily, Rationalism is destructive rather than constructive, and lives on the demolition of error rather than on the building of truth. As Religion falls back on the facts of human experience, Rationalism

becomes an empty dust-destroyer, the machinery of which crushes air. It is a perception of this that is making Rationalists seek to turn Ethics into a positive religion, with elements of Handelian emotion and Mendelssohnian mysticism. Now and then some rash protagonist, like Lord Kelvin, flings himself into the dust-destroyer, and is crushed as "Soapy Sam" was crushed by Huxley. The true value of Lord Kelvin's belief in "creative power" is strictly personal. It has no scientific value, for it does not rest on scientific evidence. Prof. Ray Lankester has demonstrated that beyond question, and Lord Kelvin, by his silence, has tacitly admitted that his belief is scientifically indefensible. But nothing can destroy the significance of his personal belief in "creative power."

Mr. Robertson easily tears to pieces the illogical structure of Lord Kelvin's statement that "fortuitous concourse of atoms" describes organic, but not inorganic, growth. He ridicules the conception of a God who idly watched the infinite process of the suns until at a certain point it occurred to him that he must act, and he made a microbe. He shows that Providence, according to Lord Kelvin, has nothing to do with the volcano, the storm, the tornado, that destroy thousands of human beings. These things happen in terms inorganic. The microbe is the beginning of Providence. The Black Death that slew twenty-five millions in Europe is the work of the Providence of Lord Kelvin. But as Mr. Robertson shows that Lord Kelvin is a tyro in logical discipline, he simply proves that you cannot get blood from a stone or logic from a mind which is illogical: and therefore Lord Kelvin's declaration ought to be tested, not by its logical symmetry but by its value as an expression of Lord Kelvin's belief. It is easy to say that "where know-

ledge ends God begins," but in a deep sense that gibe is a profound religious truth. It is a paraphrase of Christ's statement that the kingdom of heaven is a kingdom of little children. Religion, in fact, is and always will be illogical. A logical religion (like Calvinism) is a ghastly monstrosity. And Mr. Robertson himself comes very near a glimpse of the great fundamental fact that is at the root of all religions. Science tells us how the mechanism of existence works. Religion asks and tries to answer this question: Why is there a mechanism at all, and why does it work in this fashion? Mr. Robertson flatly refuses to ask or to answer that ultimate question. He says; "Why should we ask why?" I answer: "Why not ask why?" Let him find an answer if he can. It is enough for me that all men in all ages have asked why, and that religion is a dim attempt to answer. Animism in religion, or in that higher kind of religion, poetry, is only the utterance of man's eternal wonder at himself and his environment. Rationalism can never kill man's eternal wonder, and that is why Rationalism chants, "O for the wings of a dove."

XXXVI

DR. HORTON

THIS morning, as I plunge into the leafy luxury of Hampstead, my footfalls ringing hollow along its quiet footpaths and silent avenues, I succumb to the serene beatitude of the suburban Sabbath.

“Dear God ! The very houses seem asleep.”

Life in this cool solitude does not litter the pavements with children. The villas are calm as tombs. The air, fresh with a sudden shower, is fragrant with green smells, and the pale leaves of the lime trees filter the soft light into softer shadows. Heavenly Hampstead ! how easy religion must be to those who dwell in its rich silences ! I think of Matthew Arnold's sonnet on “East London,” where

“the fierce sun overhead
Smote on the squalid streets of Bethnal Green,
And the pale weaver, through his windows seen
In Spitalfields, look'd thrice dispirited.”

Surely it is harder to be religious in Bethnal Green. And as I sit down in Dr. Horton's beautiful church the sedate contentment of the congregation steals into my blood like a narcotic. The pews are filled with human peace. The very architecture is placid in its hexagonal repose of walls that converge up into curves of stone quietude. No need here for striving and crying, since the whole congregation is gathered into equal proximity to the pulpit, and the confronted sides reverberate to

the lightest whisper. It is a temple of calm, and Dr. Horton is an incarnation of noiseless rest—a double antithesis to the stormy thunder of Dr. Clifford in Westbourne Park Chapel.

It is difficult to describe the perfect peacefulness of the great Congregational preacher. It is not a negative quality. The man's whole personality utters itself in symbols of peace. He is carven rest. His face is a sculptured image of moral, spiritual, and intellectual noiselessness. Compared with him a cat is a noisy animal. To say that he purrs would be a violent hyperbole. His voice is silkier than anything except twilight silence. It apologizes for its delicate whisperings, and drops its diaphanous syllables into the air with the shy susurrations of a dying zephyr. And all the features of his face melt into each other as if dreading any violent salience. Only the out-thrust nose betrays the inner passion of the self-schooled temperament. The soft moustache droops downward in a subdued curve of submissive reticence, its immobile symmetry suggesting the moustache of a statue. The small, pointed beard, whitening towards the chin, is deferentially gentle. The smooth, orderly hair completes the ovillian meekness of the head. And lest the eyes should reveal a flash of human impatience they are masked by spectacles that seem part of the man's inscrutable physiognomy. Unlike Dr. Clifford he uses them as a shield, not as a weapon.

His gestures are all in a concatenation according. They move in a slow circle of deprecating abnegations, as if the man were begging you to overlook the fact that he has been washed by some strange vicissitude into the pulpit. He folds his hands with demure tentativeness. He poises his crooked fingers in arrested apposition. He places the palms delicately together in the

attitude of a saintly effigy. He interlocks his fingers, the tips turned in upon the palms. But every gesture is an apologia, and not once does he fracture the circumambient air by a violent posture or a shattering change of limb. He winds and weaves his way through his sermon, sinuously suave in voice and in manner.

His preaching is all persuasion. He makes you feel that it would be ill-bred to disagree with views put so politely that they affect your mind like a sincere compliment. His intellect is flexible and subtle, and he is fond of fine distinctions and shadowy nuances. He hates exaggeration, and he shrinks from paradox and rhetoric. His sermon is grey in tone, with only one purple patch in it, and three or four splashes of dry humour. His sincerity is pellucidly palpable. There is a scrupulous exactitude in the conscience he displays as he works his way from stage to stage of his carefully constructed exposition. He is almost meticulous in the precise care with which he divides the word. His text is the word "All," taken from Titus ii. 2, "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to ALL men." He deals with the work of Lyndhurst Road, in Kentish Town, and he shows that this rich congregation does not forget its less felicitous fellow-creatures. In Kentish Town it strives to speak to "all." To the men in the Adult School and the Class for men. To the younger men in the Institute. To the boys in the Boys' Club and the Boys' Brigade. The women they approach separately by the system of visitors who go from house to house, by the Women's Adult School and the Mothers' Meetings, by the Maternity Club, and by the Workroom. For the girls there is the Girls' Club and the Girls' Parlour, and the Purity League. For the children there is the Sunday School, the Band of Hope, and the little Societies of

Children. There are one hundred and fifty workers engaged in these good works. It is pleasant to find that this luxurious congregation has so practical a side to its existence.

The sermon is a Hortonian excursus on the seven ages of man. I like best of all his homily on the art of demeanour. St. Paul bids Titus to charge the old women to be "reverent in demeanour." "I have thought a great deal about that word demeanour," says the Preacher, with delightful *naïveté*. He tells how John Mackenzie, the great South African missionary, acquired his demeanour. When he was a young man he had a bad demeanour. He was shy, awkward, blushing. But by secret prayer he learned a right demeanour. Dr. Horton met him in his old age, and was amazed by the composure and dignity of his manner. Well, I delight in this piece of self-portraiture, for Dr. Horton is himself an artist in demeanour. His demeanour is fixed in the Greek sense of the word *κατάστημα*, fixed in immobile and immutable calm.

XXXVII

DR. GUINNESS ROGERS

ON a seat in Hyde Park, near the Marble Arch, a butt-end of humanity sits hunched, humped, huddled. All night the rain had streamed down his greasy rags. He is soaked and sodden. His face and hands are strangely clean, having been washed back to their unhealthy pallor by hours of perpetual rain. The church bells are clanging, but the abject wretch keeps his posture of damp inertia. A policeman comes along, and stirs the mass of misery with his boot. "Out you go, sonny!" With slow, dreary indifference the rags straighten into the grotesque parody of a man. As the steamy moisture of his lamentable clothes clings to his clammy flesh, the man shivers. Then, thrusting with difficulty his dank hands into danker pockets, he shambles out into the Bayswater Road. As he crosses the broad street a hansom passes by, and the fag-end of a cigar is flung out of the window. The decayed creature picks it out of the mud, and sucks at it greedily until it sears his lips. Then he takes out an old clay pipe, and carefully crams the remnant of tobacco into the bowl. Drifting along the streets, at length he turns into the Marylebone Road, and there stands against a wall, watching with lack-lustre eyes the procession of churchgoers. Nobody notices the miserable being. The rain falls in perpendicular rods, splashing on the pavement into a mist of fine vapour. From Paddington Chapel the faint drone of an organ floats out, and then

the thin cadence of a hymn. The rags shamble across the street, hover for a moment in the porch, and then slip quietly into an obscure pew at the back. The other occupants hastily surrender a long space to the intruder.

In the pulpit a very grim old man with a very grim voice is gazing with very grim eyes through very grim gold spectacles over a reading-desk. Misery looks at him with dim interest. It does not rise to sing with the congregation. It does not pretend to pray. It sits still and stares, while pools of water widen round its squelching boots. "Have we not power to eat and to drink?" As this ironic question detaches itself from the lesson the damp fingers twitch on the sloppy hat, and the ghost of a thought disturbs the expressionless face. "Doth God take care for oxen?" But the ironies of religion are beyond this wretch. The Pauline apophthegms are thundered out, but he betrays no vestige of comprehension. "Who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?" The fumes of praise and prayer at last mount to the brain of the miserable, his head drops forward, his eyes shut, his mouth opens, his shapeless hat slips to the floor. He sleeps. The grim old man in the pulpit troubles him no longer. Suddenly there is a silence, and the silence wakes the slumberer. The plates are going round. The chink of silver and the thud of coppers is heard, and then comes the sermon.

I Corinthians ix. 12, "Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ." What power? The power of the preacher to live by preaching, according to the ordinance that "they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." This heel-tap of humanity, this refuse of Christianity, listens. He is old, nearly as

old as the preacher. The preacher is very severe, very sure, very dictatorial. He has a hard, steel-jointed mouth, with lips that close tight and true like a safe-door. His face is an assemblage of sharp corners and acute angles, as pitiless as Ibsen's or as Chamberlain's. The young folk in the choir seem to regard him with respectful dread, hardly daring to smile when he gives out the wrong hymn. His forehead is knotted into menacing wrinkles between the eyebrows, and his hollow cheeks are creased and crinkled with habitual severity. His chin is sharply separated from the jaw by deep, downward indentations. The whole aspect is a dry austerity, a hardened sanctity. No sentiment, no emotion, no dubiety, no accommodativeness. All granitic character, character that has set and settled itself like cooled lava, and henceforth changes no whit.

An old-fashioned figure, almost Gladstonian in its air. The very tint and texture of the ivory skin is venerable—a skin drained of impulse and speculation and passion, and now a perfect parchment. The voice is curiously young and clear and strong, rolling out its periods in a kind of habitual eloquence, distributing its stresses with the almost mechanical ease of recurrent custom. One feels that the eloquence exists apart from the words it happens to run along, just as a locomotive exists apart from the rails. The style of oratory is early Victorian, and the little white tie under the dog's-eared collar is in keeping with it. The ideas and standpoints are early Victorian, defiantly out of touch with modern thought and modern sentiment. He defines the Gospel, in effect, as being everything that is out-of-date. He deprecates the Higher Criticism. It is not the Gospel. He is the exact antithesis of Reginald Campbell, who holds that Evangelicalism ought to keep abreast of modern thought. Hitherto

the liberal theologies have been mainly associated with Ritualism. Mr. Campbell is really the first Evangelical who has dared to be modern.

But that is not all. Dr. Rogers denies that the Gospel is a scheme of social reform. Here again he clashes with the Campbell view, which regards social reform as a vital part of the Gospel. "You may build men houses of the most perfect style, you may attend to every law of modern sanitary science, you may educate the children, you may interest, entertain, and please the dwellers in model dwellings, but when you have done it all you have not taught the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is possible to be very humanitarian, very kind, very generous, very liberal, and yet not to preach the Gospel. The Gospel does not deal with the houses but with the inhabitants, not with the surroundings but with the men. The great secret of human misery is sin, and the only way of curing sin is to convert the sinner." These be bold words, words that recall the good, old, simple days; but, alas! Mr. Booth has recorded the failure of the Gospel in London to "convert the sinner." However, it is better to ignore facts. Vile creature, thy rags proclaim thy depravity! If thou wert not a sinner thou wouldst be as well clad, as well fed, and as respectable as these good folk into whose righteousness thy iniquity thrusts itself! But the shabby and shameful sinner glides out into the rain, and I fear he finds it hard to realize the great truth—proclaimed so eloquently by the preacher—that God is Love.

Yes, I fear the preacher is old-fashioned. He deprecates theological controversy, but the controversies to which he alludes are belated and forgotten names. Election, Predestination, Final Perseverance—who bothers to-day about these ancient futilities?

And, instead of tolerantly meeting "honest doubt," and putting himself in the place of the honest doubter, the preacher issues an imperative ultimatum. Doubt he denounces as madness, and he ridicules those who trol out some miserable peradventure. It is no use saying you have no settled convictions. You can do nothing save by faith. Accept and maintain the authority of the Gospel, and all will be well. These august generalities appeal to the "professing Christian," but what of the outsider? Is it not a pity to try to prohibit his perplexities by issuing an irade, by promulgating a ukase? But the preacher looks at his watch, and after an eloquent peroration, in the course of which he declares that we must teach man that God loves him, and that Christ died for him, he sends us forth strangely listless and languid, with our obscure life unillumined and our spiritual hungers unappeased.

XXXVIII

DR. LORIMER

WHETHER the actual number of churchgoers be one in five, or one in four, or one in three, the fact remains that at least four millions of Londoners stay away from church. In other words, there are more Christians outside the Churches than there are inside them. My own impression is that the grand fault is in the pulpit. Preachers, as a rule, are far behind the average educated man and the average educated woman in their intellectual equipment. The pulpit is the one platform from which free speech is excluded. The man in the pew may not challenge, or criticize, or debate. He must listen and be dumb. Is this modern?

It seems to me that the abuse of authority is the real mischief which alienates thoughtful men and women from the churches. The remedy is free speech. Why not set apart, say, half an hour at the end of the sermon for the answering of questions? If necessary, let the questions be written, so as to avoid unseemliness or irreverence. If every preacher knew that he must justify every statement there would be an end of slovenly and slipshod sermons, and incompetent preachers would be compelled to seek another vocation. At present, a preacher may preach for twenty years without finding out that the pews despise his sermons. I know congregations which unanimously agree in regarding their preacher as fatuous and futile,

and yet the man continues to dispense fatuity and futility from the pulpit till he dies. The pulpit has too long been sheltered from the bracing wind of criticism. In this book I have tried to break down that intolerable tyranny by applying to the preacher the test that is applied to every other public man. Some good folk may be shocked by my disregard for the divine right of the pulpit, but on the whole I feel quite sure that churchgoers will welcome honest criticism. If preachers could only hear the unspoken comments of their listeners! Canon Scott-Holland, I observe, takes an optimistic view of the posture of the modern churchgoer. He says: "No longer does the unhappy preacher feel himself beating up in vain against stiff walls of stodgy plum-pudding. Now it is jelly that quivers. It is really alive." There is the danger. If the listeners are alive, woe to the preacher who is not alive!

This morning I go to hear a famous New York preacher, Dr. Lorimer, in Marylebone Presbyterian Church, Upper George Street, near the Marble Arch. He, at any rate, is alive. His prayer is alive. He prays for the widow and the daughter of a member of the congregation whose funeral took place on the previous day. That may seem a small thing, but it is significant. A church ought to be a fraternity, in which British snobbery is extirpated, and every man and every woman, whether rich or poor, is absolutely equal. Until the Churches have the courage to obliterate class and caste the poor will stay outside. Too often the preacher is the worst offender in this respect. Let him assert the brotherhood of Christians in the pulpit, and very soon there will be brotherhood in the pew. Dr. Lorimer's practice may not be as lofty as his precept, but assuredly his sermon is a bold

affirmation of the connection between the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man.

His personality is rich. Lean and long, he reminds one of many famous Americans, of Daniel Webster, of Emerson, of Abraham Lincoln—not so much in his features as in his temperament. He is full of a parched solemnity, a crackling melancholy, a dry austerity. Seldom in our pulpits do we see anything so solemn as his solemnity. Solemn presence, solemn face, solemn eyes, solemn mouth, solemn gesture, solemn voice. Not Wordsworth himself wore a longer monotony of countenance. He is built like a skyscraper, tier on tier of legs and arms and features. His nose is long, his cheeks are long, his chin is long, and all these lengths are poised on a long neck that springs out of a long shaft of black frock-coat, tightly buttoned round a long trunk resting on long legs. Then there is a long perpendicular ridge of wrinkled flesh from the towering cheekbone to the long, lean curve of the jaw. Amid these lengths the dark sunken eyes, set wide apart, glow with that woefully sad and weary energy which is characteristic of Americans, and over them jut pent-house eyebrows which intensify their mournful fire. His head and his body are strung and strained backward, making an obtuse angle with his legs, and when he folds his long arms one half expects to see the thin white hands clasped behind his back.

He does not read his sermon—and here I may say that read sermons ought to be abolished. No, he preaches with fresh, not stale, emotions, and his words fall molten from his lips. The tradition of oratory has always flourished in America, whereas in England it has languished, owing to the spread of that social cynicism which is only a cultured form of snobbery. Dr. Lorimer plays with consummate skill on his

audience. Indeed, at one point in his sermon the emotional tension became intolerable. Quickly realizing that the surging tide of emotion was about to break, by a swift transition he swept his theme to a less passionate plane. Like a flash, the whole congregation sighed with relief, handkerchiefs fluttered, and the shy English temperament hastily took refuge in its habitual impassivity. It was strange to see matter-of-fact Englishmen quivering with violent emotion, their breath coming in short gaspings, their eyes moist with tears. And yet the Preacher eschewed claptrap, his appeal being essentially noble and grave and serene.

John xiv. 8, "Philip saith unto Him, Master, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." The most sensational valour of his argument is its bold denial of the doctrine that God reveals Himself in Nature. Nature is inexorable. Whatever may be your creed she will grind you to powder. We cannot discern the Fatherhood of God in the vomiting flames of Mont Pélée, in the earthquake, in the pestilence. Nature is a splendid veil that falls over the face of God. We try to lift it up, and we can see the contour of His face, perhaps a trifle stern, but we do not detect His love. Only in Christ can we see the Father. That is a gospel which is inexpugnable. Against it science and rationalism hurl themselves in vain. Like Mr. Campbell, he preaches straight from the personality of Christ to the personality of man. He shows how the impersonal religions of the East have slain individuality and arrested progress, whereas the personality of Christ is the source of that individualism which has built up the Christian civilization of the West. As he develops this splendid theory, his slow, dragging, syllabic voice hoarsens with rapture, and the live sentences, tearing, grinding, shearing, rasping, hacking, saw their way

through our ears. There is a fierce beauty in these raucous huskinesses, these high cacophonous discords, the beauty of escaping energies, of outleaping fires. Giordano Bruno said that God is an interior artist. Well, there is a divine fury working inside this man, and one cannot deny its reality, for the words that break through our indifference are witnesses too passionate for artifice, too fiery for affectation.

XXXIX

REV. BERNARD SNELL

ONCE upon a time I read a book of poems entitled "The City of the Soul." To-day, as I walk down Lombard Street, Gracechurch Street, and Bishopsgate Street Within, I catch myself yearning for a poem about the Soul of the City. For the City has a Soul, a vast, dim, sombre Spirit that pulses mightily through its stone arteries and asphalte veins. That Soul grins and grimaces at me as I walk along, grins from the giant banks whose noiseless portals open and close on immense mysteries; from the dandiacal Israelite tailor, thumb in arm-hole, standing at his door; from the tiny clerks eating pastry in a hundred tea-shops; from the tropical bananas in the coster's barrow; from the helmeted policemen; from the criss-cross telephone wires.

What sort of a Soul is it? Is it Caliban or Oberon, Ariel or Pantagruel, Don Quixote or Childe Roland, Falstaff or Faust, Comus or La Belle Dame Sans Merci? Perhaps it is a gross mixture of them all, for the City is a monster, half human, half divine, with one hand in heaven and the other in hell. Its lungs are filled with gold; each labouring breath it inspires and expires bears millions like motes. It sighs, and there is ruin in Van Diemen's Land! it laughs, and there is joy in Japan. How is Humanity? Put your finger on the wrist of the City, and it will answer you.

But surely, you say, the City is soulless. It is the quintessence of materialism. Nonsense. It is the earth-centre of idealism. The most fantastic ideal in the world is the pursuit of wealth. Money is the oldest superstition, and the worship of the golden calf is the most ancient religion. The delusion that anything valuable can be bought is the maddest delusion in the history of mankind. What is the most valuable thing in the world? Happiness. Can you buy or sell happiness in the City? No, not an ounce, not a grain, not a pennyweight. The City, nevertheless, is built on that master-delusion. It is the largest monument ever erected in honour of a dream.

There is, I observe, a wild notion among practical men that "poetry" is a false, erroneous, and inaccurate thing. Mr. Chamberlain the other day wished to discover an epithet for an economic fallacy uttered by an opponent. He said, "I call that poetry." He thought he was annihilating his enemy. In reality he was paying him a high compliment. For there is nothing on earth so free from falsity, and error, and inaccuracy as poetry. If I were to call Mr. Chamberlain a poet, I should be guilty of charitable libel. For it is only in the hard, practical, commonsense business world that you find error in its purest form. The City is a huge fantasy of insane ideals. The City man is a raving lunatic compared with the poet. The poet sits down and writes:—

"Daffodils that come before the swallow dares
And take the winds of March with beauty."

I challenge Mr. Pierpont Morgan to head his next prospectus with this legend:—

"Dividends that come before the bulls and bears
And take the Stock Exchange with beauty."

There is no beauty in money. I often ponder over the Philistine custom of putting coins under foundation-stones. Why not poems? Five thousand years hence the New Zealand archæologist who may be excavating among the ruins of London would shout with joy over a lost sonnet by Rossetti, but he would hardly exult over a Victorian halfpenny.

But even in the City there are dreams within dreams. As I enter Bishopsgate Chapel a thrush throws me a string of liquid pearls. An idealist imprisoned by an idealist! Why does the thrush shake with ecstasy? Ah, there's the riddle of the universe! Explain the song of the thrush, and you explain everything. As the City men in the pews stand up and sing, the thrush interweaves his music with theirs. The whole mystery of religion trembles in the noise. And the man in the pulpit has the same spiritual alarm in his eager eyes and in his tumultuous voice. He and the thrush are made of the same mystery.

The Preacher might be a City man, with his trim brown beard, his orderly moustache, his black coat, his neat tie, and unministerial manner. But by some inadvertence he is what Mr. Chamberlain would call a poet. He rolls out a mystical text. Proverbs xxix. 18, "Where there is no vision the people perish." He sings the song of the thrush. The thrush has a soul above worms, and rape, and hemp-seed. Shall man be less dissatisfied than the thrush? The Preacher proclaims the utility of useless things, the importance of being mad. The man or the nation without an ideal decays. As he strives to awaken in us a lost terror, a forgotten dread, a buried fear, his voice sounds like a tocsin clanging peals of warning. The whole energy of the man explodes in sharp detonations. His voice bursts with sudden urgency. He fills our pale lassitude

of monotonous routine with a wild impulse to get up and do something. He shouts as a man shouts who seeks to rouse sleepers in a burning house. His arms whirl in gestures that hint of imminent peril. His anxiety chokes him. See, he stands with mouth wide open, like a tragic mask, waiting for a fierier word, a hotter phrase. Soon the pews catch his excitement. There are murmurs of assent, muttering applause.

This man is too earnest to use the jargon of theology. He strikes new phrases from his own passion. "God has set eternity in our hearts"—"Get beneath the crust of circumstance"—"Let us live finely." He chants a pæan to the Commonwealth, our Hebrew period, when men went to the heart of things in religion and in politics. "Our religion—our politics—God help us!"

It is strange to hear a man flinging forth frenzied appeals to other men to be men. Do lions adjure lions to be lions? Do sheep implore sheep to be sheep? Surely, this is the human paradox.

He boldly avers that the golden age is not past. "Your soul," he cries, "is as aboriginally divine as any soul that ever lived. The authority of your soul is the ultimate authority through which God speaks." Is it not a stupendous anomaly that man has to be terrified and startled into the discovery of his spiritual superiority to the beasts of the field?

Truly, the Preacher has cause for his feverish fury. He prophesies the decay of England unless she recaptures the vision, the dream, the fantasy. Not by taxes and tariffs can she escape the doom of Rome, but by turning away from material delusions to the great practical idealisms. There is a note of despair in the volleying voice as its husky adjurations grow more impassioned. Can this great Empire clamber out of

the Slough of Despond? Can England throw off her mercenary self-consciousness, and stride down the new century with her head high, her heart beating with holy ideals, not deigning to bribe destiny and suborn the fates? For wealth without ideals means moral death to a nation as well as to man. "Where there is no vision the people perish." That is the Song of the City, the Song of the Thrush, and the Song of the Preacher.

XL

PASTOR THOMAS SPURGEON

IF you wish to see something that you can see in no city save London, go and stand for an hour at the Elephant and Castle. That swirling whirlpool is a pocket edition of London. This Sunday morning the great circus looks like a reveller reeling home, musing moodily over its Saturday night jamboree, musing with a steam-hammer headache. Is it strange that the giant Tabernacle, grey and grim and grave, is frowning stonily at the Elephant? Sad, sombre, heavily good-natured, it heaves itself up into the sky on its fat pillars with the true London phlegm. Drowsily unconscious of its own immensity, it frowns its Brobdingnagian frown.

Inside, the huge galleries are gay with gold, and the vast building rocks with a lumbering gaiety, a titanic architectural chuckle. Gigantic is the congregation—men and women bedded out in ovals and squares by some giant gardener. There is a sense of freedom and light and air, due to the generous spacing of the pews and the aisles and the gangways. It is like a double-leaded newspaper, suggesting a full emptiness, an empty fulness. The pulpit-platform accentuates this skiey atmosphere. It is built for a giant orator, for a preacher with arms many fathoms long, and gestures moving in a circle as big as the Great Wheel at Earl's

Court. On the first tier there is a long, empty table with a row of empty chairs. On each side curves upward a polished balustrade converging in the centre on the Bible and the Preacher. (It conjures up the old fable that Spurgeon once illustrated the ease with which men go to hell by sliding down the balustrade of his pulpit.) Behind the Preacher sit the Elders, most of them venerably grey, with finely contrasted physiognomies, worthy pillars of this historic temple. How paintable they are! How strong is the play of character in each good reverend face! A frieze of Nonconformity!

And how splendidly all these impressions are knotted together by the black-bearded Precentor, as he steps forward with open hymn-book held up in two hands, and opening his mouth hurls out the opening note of the opening Psalm. A quaintly simple symbol of that terrible simplicity of Dissent! What a gulf between him and the gorgeous Anglican choir—between the bare human voice and the organ with its rich musical luxuries! There is a humorous facet in this old fragment of use and wont which keeps the voice of the People a note behind the voice of the Precentor; but that is lost in the strident passion of the congregational chant which crashes out like a war-song—like the iron burden that throbs in Tennyson's lines:—

“And far below the Roundheads rode,
And hummed a surly hymn.”

There is something terrible in simplicity, and here the simplicity of Dissent is found in its most dangerous purity. The secret of Spurgeon was inspired simplicity, and if his son and successor, Pastor Thomas Spurgeon, has not the genius of his father's simplicity, he has the

simplicity of his father's genius. That quality is rare in these days, when men are seldom made in a piece, when character is a brittle composite of shoddy compromises and clever expediencies. It would have been a profound error to have put in Spurgeon's pulpit a showy pyrotechnist or a subtle thinker. For Spurgeon spoke to the homely and the humble as no preacher of our time has spoken. Often I am assailed by an anguish of envious compassion as I watch the rapt faces of old women drinking in sacred emotions as the roses drink in the sunlight. A simple chemistry, perhaps, but mayhap in the spiritual mystery simplicity means more than subtlety. The preacher's simplicity is no negative sterility, but a rich, lovable quality made of personal sincerities and earnestly matured rectitudes. He is a Spurgeonic Spurgeon, with his father's large, loose, sleepy visage, aureole of stiff, upstanding bristling iron-grey hair, and forthright, shrewd, heavy-lidded candour of glance; small, sensitive ears; softly rounded chin with a vertical dimple; drooping moustache veiling a genial, tolerant, unsymmetrical mouth; twinkling, good-natured eyes; a sound, homely, sensible body, void of small malices, eminently honest and clear and straight, free from kinks and crankiness; manly strength growing out of a sunny temperament drained of guile. The voice is full, deep, and clear, eddying in easy circles of sound. A plain Cockney voice with racy Cockney vowelizations that chime musically with the dialect of the Elephantine zone; its i's and a's long drawn out in the true London cadence; a pleasant harmony of culture and democracy in its sweet, clear treble tones.

Simple is the Preacher, simple the prayer, simple the sermon. The Puritan spirit is strong in him. He

prays that simple worship may take the place of what art suggests and science admires. He prays for the unaged Gospel and the unembellished Cross. He prays for deliverance from priestcraft and unfair legislation. Let the saints of God be dowered with the gentle spirit of Jesus, combined with his adamant firmness. The sermon is Spurgeonically simple. Deuteronomy xii. 9, "For ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance which the Lord your God giveth you." He divides his theme into three simple parts: (1) We have started, (2) we have not arrived, (3) we shall arrive. He uses the old Puritan imagery, likening the saints to the Israelites, sin to the land of bondage, the desert to the world, and heaven to the Promised Land. John Bunyan would have nodded and amened approval to his homely points, just as these old men and old women round me, the Old Guard of Spurgeon, are nodding and amening their approval. His style is Biblical. He thinks in texts. His hearers know the language. They beam as the familiar words flow down in torrents. His phrasing is very direct. "Satan is not dead—he is only shamming." References to Satan nowadays are not usual. Here he is a reality. And the warrior saints also are real. "We have powder in our breasts!" cries the Pastor. Hell, too, is real, and Heaven withal. Heaven is not a nebulous mirage, but an actual place, a city as solidly vivid as the city seen by Tennyson's traveller:

"whose footsteps halt
Toiling in immeasurable sand,
And o'er a weary, sultry land,
Far beneath a blazing vault,
Sown in a wrinkle of the monstrous hill,
The city sparkles like a grain of salt."

These august simplicities the Pastor proclaims, as his

father proclaimed them to simple hearers who are unvexed by the sad subtleties of a rationalized religion. *Sancta simplicitas.* Methinks the ironic tag has a deep significance, for Christianity is built on the simple faith of simple souls.

XLI

TORREY AND ALEXANDER

I. ALEXANDER THE GREAT

IT is half-past six. The Albert Hall is a Brobdingnagian beehive. Twelve thousand bees have swarmed into their numbered cells. The air is dizzy with packed life, pink with the vague flesh of swaying faces. As I enter Box No. 1 the hot breath of the multitude smites my cheek, and I reel as the hanging acres of humanity rush upon my vision. The crowd seems to be a huge sentient mammoth, one vast monster made out of tiers and terraces of men and women. I feel the beat of its gigantic heart, the sigh of its enormous lungs. It is waiting—for what?

Twenty-four thousand eyes gaze at a square crimson pedestal in the centre of the orchestra. But the pedestal is empty. Ah! The crowd leans forward as a tall, lean, lithe apparition climbs the steps and stands on the pedestal like one of the statues in Trafalgar Square. Deep silence. The statue is a study in black and white and pink—black cylinder-legs, black cylinder-body, black cylinder-arms; white collar, out of which leaps a pink polished bald head and a pink polished beardless face; white cuffs, out of which spring pink polished hands. Ah! It is Alexander.

The statue speaks. Like the dying Goethe he calls for light—light—more light. “If there is any one here who has influence with the people who can put on the light, I wish they would put on the light.”

The voice is clear, sharp, colourless, keen-edged. It cuts the air like a swallow's wing. The crowd rustles with shy laughter. It likes Alexander. His personality tickles it. There are now only two forces in the beehive. One is the Crowd: the other is Alexander. And Alexander takes the Crowd in his pink hands, puts it under his chin, and plays on it. The Crowd is a giant violin, and his Voice is a giant bow. London likes new sensations, and London likes Alexander the Great.

Alexander is more than a Choir Conductor. He is a Crowd Conductor. In ten minutes he turns this huge multitude into a choir. He teaches them to obey him. He gives them singing lessons. He begins with his vast choir, which is skilfully posted in strategic positions, not massed in one spot. That superb hymn, "Abide with me," serves as an ensample of his method. He first makes his choir whisper it, sigh it, croon it, murmur it. Then he calls on the Crowd. "Don't look at your books: look at me!" And the Crowd follows his flowing gestures; its enormous tones are led from note to note so deftly that it gasps with surprise. Have you ever seen twelve thousand people visibly pleased with themselves? No? Then go to the Albert Hall.

His skill in analyzing the Crowd is amazing. First he makes all the choir women sing; then all the men. Then all the women in the top gallery; then the first three rows—a dim, faint blur of sound, half-drowned by the lidless Steinway piano. Then all the women in the hall. "If you've never sung before, sing now!" Then all the men—their deep, dark tones silhouetted against the paler tones of the women. "Do you like that chorus?" Cries of "Yes!" "Then sing it!"

The climax of this bizarre sensation is the "Glory

Song," the battle hymn of the Revival. "This is the Glory Song. I want you to sing it all the rest of your life. It will do you good." The choir sings it. Then he claps his hands, stamps his feet, curves his lithe body, swings his arms, wheels round with coat-tails flying, and works the Crowd into one wild whirl of emotion:

"Oh, that will be . . . glory for me . . .
 Glory for me . . . glory for me . . .
 When by His grace I shall look on His face,
 That will be glory, be glory for me."

The hollow o's in the chorus ring out sonorously, and the liquid r's slide and turn in a vast tumult of sound. The tune is catching, and the Crowd swiftly picks it up. "You've been practising it!" The Crowd laughs like a happy child. "I see you Londoners can sing." The Crowd laughs again.

Yes, Alexander is an artist. And he can touch the stops of various quills. There are two universal chords of pathos and pity—love of the dead and love of a mother. He plays artfully on these chords. "Friends will be there I have loved long ago." This is the first line of the last stanza of the "Glory Song." He calls upon those who have lost "loved ones" to sing it. He frankly says that this stanza always "breaks them down." He opens the old wounds of sorrow, and as the Crowd sings there is a tragic wail in the music. But the master stroke is a hymn with the heartrending refrain, "Tell mother I'll be there," based upon President McKinley's telegram to his dying mother. The words are bald and banal:

"When I was but a little child how well I recollect
 How I would grieve my mother by my folly and neglect :
 And now that she has gone to Heaven I miss her tender care :
 O Saviour, tell my mother I'll be there."

"Though I was often wayward, she was always kind and good—
So patient, gentle, loving, when I *acted rough and rude* . . .

"When I became a prodigal, and left the old roof-tree,
She almost broke her loving heart in mourning after me . . ."

And so on. It is the acme of crude *naïveté*, but it "breaks them down," as it broke down "thirty-five young Cambridge men" the other day. (Young Oxford has not been broken down yet.) As Alexander sings the chorus in clear, poignant, staccato tones, the Hall is hushed with emotion. Then a pause, and out of the distance soars an answering voice, shudderingly nervous, cuttingly clear, turning the r's in that indescribable American twang. It is the cheap device now so familiar in the music halls, and it produces the usual effect. The Crowd cranes its neck to see the mysterious singer. In vain! The voice issues out of the vague.

Another curious sensation is produced by one of the lines in the "Glory Song." "Just a smile from my Saviour." The three sibilants in these words when sung softly by ten thousand voices sound like a long, low undulating hiss—the sibilation of a great wind breathing through innumerable leaves. As the vast voice swells, Alexander cries, "Hush! Hush!" and it obediently dies down into a strange rustling murmur. Yes, this magician with his icy American precision, his voice like a silver trumpet, his electrical gestures, is a master of manifold arts.

Torrey? Well, Torrey is also exotic, bizarre, fascinating. Rotund, solid, immobile—a thick, black frock-coat standing on two strong, black, firmly-planted legs. The frock-coat curves back exuberantly into the nape of the neck; above it a white splash of collar, and a pink polished bald head, a face all sharp edges, a cropped, grey-white beard keenly pointed.

Incisive, dogmatic, imperious, impatient. His voice pure Chicago, racily Western in its vowels; violently direct. "Have—you—come—to—God?" He emphasizes every word, and every syllable of every word. He stresses his prepositions and conjunctions. "Students" he pronounces "stoodents." He is a "throw-back" to the old type of evangelist. He defies modern thought as Spurgeon defied it. He derides the "Infidel" as Moody derided him. He jettisons every subtlety. He preaches "old-time" religion. He does not argue: he orders. He does not plead: he commands. But the dynamite of the Revival is Alexander the Great. He has made London hum—the "Glory Song."

II.—DR. TORREY

Is Dr. Torrey a failure? He is a failure, a grotesque failure—as a theatrical sensation, as a Transatlantic freak. But after watching him very closely I have come to the conclusion that he is not likely to be a failure as an evangelist. For some of his views I have no sympathy, but the man interests me. If he were a Buddhist or a Confucian, it would not disturb my attitude. For there is one quality in this man which is rare. He is an incarnate agony of concentrated will.

Look at this amorphous, loose-lipped, languid crowd. Note how the weak faces predominate. Then look at Torrey. The whole body of the man is like a strung bow. His vital energy is painfully crammed into his stern face. It is with real discomfort that one watches the inner resolution beating its way through the hard remorseless brow, the merciless steely eyes, the relentlessly jammed lips, the fiercely knotted fists. The man's will is wrathfully compressed into one small needlepoint of aim. Some spiritual burning-glass has

focussed the flame of him into one minute fleck of white fire, and as that fleck falls upon these thousands of passive soul-surfaces, it seems to scorch, and sear, and shrivel. I find nothing else in this man—nothing save a terrible volition, a fiery concentration of the will.

But is that rare? Yes, very rare. Intellect is commoner than will. When a great intellect is associated with a great will the result is a Julius Cæsar, a Shakespeare, or a Napoleon. When a small intellect is associated with a great will the result is a Torrey. I am not under-estimating Dr. Torrey's culture, but I do say that he is a very ordinary man in everything except in his abnormal will. That makes his profile almost Napoleonic. You laugh? Well, study this man's cold fury, his passionless iron brow, his bitterly bitten mouth, the piercing frigidity of his eyes, the hard, harsh level intensity of his voice, the unsmiling fanaticism of his glance, and you will—not laugh.

No, he is not lovable. He is not charming. He is not a Moody. He is a Finney. Who was Finney? He was an American evangelist of the granitic order, a fierce, iron-faced, marble-mouthed apostle, hard as the nether millstone, pitiless as fate, a hammer of moral wrath, a hurler of hell-fire, a dogmatist, a plenary inspirationist, a wielder of the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible. As Finney was, Torrey is.

Finney's main attack was directed against Laodicean churchgoers. So is Torrey's. That is sound strategy, for the scandal of Christianity is the paganism of Christians. “Do we Believe?” asks the *Daily Telegraph*, and receives a million confused answers. Torrey believes. That is his strength. His credo is as absolute as that of the Roman Catholic Church. He concedes nothing to modern thought, nothing to the

higher criticism. To him Driver is naught, Harnack foolishness, and Haeckel derision. A grim, rough, defiant Puritan, he smites compromising tolerance with furious denunciations, and his heaviest blows fall upon the religious, the pious, the righteous.

Let me caricature him. Skull very deep but very narrow; perpendicular forehead, with razor-edged brows; eyes small, deep-sunken, contracted, full of darting frozen fire; nose rampant, challenging, sharply carved right to the keen tip; heavily indented nostrils; ear small, set low and far back; mouth clamped like a vice under a fierce military moustache; chin thrusting out its pointed tuft of grey beard in pugilistic pugnacity; hard, lean, fleshless grey jaw shorn close; the grey hair left round the base of the gleaming skull cut close as Lord Roberts's. The head and face of a soldier! It belongs to the Cæsar-Napoleon-Bismarck type. The body is corpulent but solidly vigorous, and stands squarely on stiff legs planted wide apart. The hands are small, nervous, refined, but imperious; the index finger long and minatory. The whole man is a live menace, a vivid ultimatum, with a clenched heart, a clenched soul, a clenched mind, and a clenched body. Clenched? Yes, his very brows and eyes and lips are clenched in a tense fury of agonized will.

How does he charge up to the guns of the Churches? By calling upon Christians to obey Christ. It seems trite, but it is volcanically new, for this man calls upon every Christian to "save" others. He says it is the business of their life. He preaches the great democratic doctrine that every soul is equal in value. The soul of Jenny in Piccadilly is worth more than all the diamonds of De Beers. The soul of the ragged gamin is as valuable as the soul of the King. It is the old story told with austere ferocity, with haggard fire. The

Soul—what is it? Oh, you polished elegances of London, hedonists and dilettanti, cosmopolitan sippers of sifted delight, bibbers of rare poetry and prose, tasters of art and music, dabblers in the last cries of science, what is the soul? Despise this man, if you will. Sneer at his rasping dialect, his husky Westernisms, his crude phrasing, his obscurantist biases. But down in your depths, are you not afraid of—yourselves? In some sort have not we too, we also, souls to save, our own and others? From what? Well, from divers kinds of death. It is into the myriad supple insincerities of London that this hoarse harsh voice crashes with a primitive challenge like the challenge of love or death. It is the eternal cry of driven humanity; the quenchless yearning of man the insatiate, the insatiable, the questioner, the pursuer.

Will this man cry in vain? I do not know. London is a grey stone Sphinx whose riddle is hard to read. She is cold and critical. She is scornfully passive. She will not capitulate at the first blast of an American trumpet. She is now tolerantly contemptuous, curiously scornful, sarcastically amused. "Are they humbugs?" is the question one hears from the man in the street. "How much are they getting out of it?" "Are they any better than Dowie?" "They are smart business men." That is the gossip of the average sensual critic. Well, we shall see. I think these men are sincere. Dr. Torrey is a blast-furnace of faith. He is not an impostor, for nobody could feign passion so terribly elemental, so brutally disconcerting, so fiercely uncomfortable. No quack could probe the conventional piety of the pious so pitilessly. No charlatan could carry on his head so clear an aureole of reality. Reality! Yes, that is the one thing we lack, the one thing we seek. This hot gosseller has it, is it

—or seems to have it, seems to be it. Will he fire the Churches? Will he set the “professing Christians” ablaze? If he does, he will shake London. If not, London will smile and chatter and—forget. But the problem of the Soul will remain, and London will go on working at it in terms of the world, the flesh and the devil, in the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. And ginger will still be hot in the mouth.

REV. JOHN McNEILL

LONDON has been quixotically generous towards these American revivalists. She could not have given Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John a warmer welcome. She could not have opened her arms widelier to St. Peter and St. Paul. In fact, it is not Torrey and Alexander who are trying to revive London: it is London that is trying to revive Torrey and Alexander. That is the paradox of the Albert Hall revival. The thing is pathetic. Jerusalem no longer stones the prophets: she booms them. The modern apostle no longer needs to seek the lost: it is the lost who seek the modern apostle. It is not Cardiff that runs away from Evan Roberts, but Evan Roberts who runs away from Cardiff. The problem is not how to save those who neglect salvation, but how to save those who hustle for it every afternoon and every evening.

For the first time in history the world is calling upon Christianity to meet its promissory notes. It is the sinner who stands at the door and knocks. It is the lost sheep that is searching for the Good Shepherd. It is the multitude that hath not where to lay its head. This is the real tragedy of Christianity. Dr. Torrey is not handicapped by the fact that London is not quite ready for him: but by the fact that he is not quite ready for London. It is very sad when the people throw stones at Stephen, but it is very much sadder when Stephen throws stones at the people. I

think Dr. Torrey might have brought London more bread and fewer stones. Hell, for instance. What is the good of threatening men with the hell they are going to when they want you to get them out of the hell they are in? What is the good of bribing people with the hope of happiness after they are dead when they are bribing you to give them happiness when they are alive? Dr. Torrey is doing his best, like the American pianist, and it would be wrong to shoot at him; but one cannot help wondering whether we have not scores of preachers at home who would send these hungry thousands less empty away.

Here, for example, is the Rev. John McNeill, filling the Albert Hall so full of spiritual laughter and tears that I realize with a gasp the tragical inadequacy of the American preacher. It would be unfair to contrast the crude sincerity of Dr. Torrey with the exquisite eloquence of a Campbell, with the polished passion of a Hensley Henson, with the fiery culture of a Clifford, with the gentle scholarship of a Horton, or with the saintly simplicity of a Meyer; for these men are larger in brain, finer in temper, and subtler in soul. But this rough Scot comes from the same school as Dr. Torrey—the school of Moody and Sankey, Spurgeon, and the Salvation Army—the sweet school of unintellectual—almost anti-intellectual—piety. (Do not despise that school, with its divinely tender traditions, its wistful aristocracy of holy men and holy women. Homer, Dante, and Shakespeare might kneel humbly before women like Frances Ridley Havergal and Catherine Booth.) What, then, is the difference between John McNeill and Dr. Torrey? This: John McNeill possesses that sense of humour which is to piety what salt is to the palate. Now, a sense of humour is more than the ability to make jokes. It is sympathy, tact, and

intuitive divination. It is an adjustment of the spirit. It is the finer democracy of the emotions. Dr. Torrey antagonizes, ruffles, alienates, chills—not consciously, but inadvertently. He has no gift of spiritual adjustment. He does not realize that a London audience must be led, not lashed; convinced, not coerced. He does not grasp the fact that Londoners are spiritually fastidious, for they hear the best preachers in the world every Sunday. They have been brought up on Liddon, Spurgeon, and Parker. They do not demand the eloquence of a Jeremy Taylor or a Bossuet, but they demand temperament, personal charm, and the sacred perfume of character.

All that they find in John McNeill, who wins every heart in a trice by describing himself as “Dawkther Tawrey wuth a Scawtch accent.” His Edinburgh Doric is as broad as Dr. Torrey’s Chicago dialect. His face is homelier than Dr. Torrey’s. The son of a quarryman, he looks like a rough unhewn block of Aberdeen granite. A square man—square-browed, square-jawed, square-faced, square-shouldered, with strong, thick, shaggy brown beard; a small, tip-tilted, bridgeless, plebeian nose; small, many-twinkling, sunken eyes, laughing under square, shaggy eyebrows like the thatched eaves of a Scottish shanty. A comfortable body withal. The high cheek-bones are well padded with solid fat, and the well-filled waistcoat is genially and generously curved. A right wide hearty mouth, made for the ejection of sonorous laughter and the reception of good cheer. No lean ascetic this, no killjoy, but a jovial Boanerges, with whom the world wags merrily. He carries a continual chuckle in his beard, converts you with a quip, and regenerates you with a jest.

His Doric has what American slang never has—the

flavour of idiom and the sting of style. He cannot be vulgar in this rare tongue that is attuned to the prose rhythms of the Bible. The twenty-third Psalm is his text, and he pours forth racy wisdom and humourous apologue bright as a Highland burn and clean as Scottish heather. He calls his preaching a thrumming on the strings of a harp. The simile is apt, for there is a peasant genius in his rough fingers, and his music has a wild poetry in its uncouth notes. There is nothing common in his eulogy of God's "goodness and mercy." There is chivalry, pride, dignity, and sturdy character in his religion. And the humour of the man bubbles out of him spontaneously. You can see him choking it back with a suppressed gurgle. He has always a solemn wonder in his mirth, and there is more gravity in his laugh than in another man's groan.

His homely manner never drops into coarseness, for you feel the rich sincerity of character in his persuasive familiarity. His gestures are artless, but perfectly apt. Hands under the tails of his coat, hands in his trouser-pockets, hands on his knees, hands clapped heartily, hands flapping against his solid hips—rough, honest hands like the paternal hands that wielded the hammer in the quarry. The hard fists are now flourishing in the air like the fists of a drummer, now making concentric rings before his face, now driving home the rough phrases like wedges; good forthright fists. And that fascinating Scottish brogue, with its long trailing vowels, its whirring double consonants, its tremendous rolling r's, its husky, hoarse lifts and sobs in the throat, its sudden intensities of sound, its flashes of tenderness—how pleasant it is after the dull uniformity of the smooth conventional English!

But what is the man's message? Well, as I have said, it is the message of temperament. He sheds his

personal force upon you, and with it vouches for his creed. You envy his jolly righteousness, his merry faith. He does not reason you into his religion : he laughs you into it. He makes Christianity supremely natural, God a camarado, and Jesus Christ a good fellow. Not a subtle reading of the riddle of the universe, perhaps, but a jovial one ; and the practical proof of it is the man himself—an embodied optimism, an incarnate cachinnation with eight bairns at home. Nobody save an optimist could give so many hostages to fortune, and could confront the mystery of life and death, and pain, and evil with a gay toss of the panache worthy of D'Artagnan. Dr. Torrey does not toss his panache. He is grim, and dour, and gloomy. Perhaps that is why London has not fallen in love with him ; for in our grey London cheerfulness does keep on breaking in.

XLIII

REV. STOPFORD BROOKE

TO travel from the Ritualists in St. Alban's, Holborn, to the Unitarians in Little Portland Street Chapel is like journeying from the Equator to the North Pole. There religion is torrid emotion ; here it is Arctic reason. The building is calmly lucid from floor to ceiling, from door to window. The clear light that falls from the oval glass in the roof is not sophisticated by legend or hagiology. There is a Greek austerity in the serene surfaces, the mild pillars, the subdued coloration. There is no mystery save in the flowers that grace the reading desk with their inextinguishable superstition.

The pulpit stands like a lonely rock glorying in its chilly isolation. Behind it is a plain table, and behind the table a white marble Christ, sculptured in relief, looks forth gently on the congregation. A Christ without wounds, or crown of thorns, or halo, or divine regalia, the face effeminately soft and pure with a certain characterless purity. On the right of this snowy Christ is another snowy sculpture—Martineau in marble. What a contrast ! The one countenance is clean emptied of humanity's wild, personal war : the other countenance is an epitome of mortal agonisings, and searchings, moral battle, and intellectual adventure. The marble Martineau gazing with troubled passion on the marble Christ ! That is Unitarianism, the lonely religion.

Loneliness is the dominant note. The worshippers are lonely. They seem to drift in like snowflakes into an ice-grotto. The Preacher in his black Geneva gown is lonely. With averted face he stands at the lonely table, while another lonely figure in a black Geneva gown reads a lonely liturgy before a lonely reading-desk. The service is a Unitarianized version of the Prayer Book—light without heat, Rontgen rays instead of sunlight—a sad, sweet lucidity of soul, infinitely touching in its rejections, its sifted beliefs, its careful faiths.

The Preacher is not marble. He is made of good Saxon flesh, strong, solid, four-square in face and frame, ruddy, unemaciated, hale, and hearty. All his features are broad, with delicate outlines in their breadth. Their dominant expression is a sensitive sanity, as of a nature that avoids extremes in its quest after truth and beauty. The firm, practical nose carries deep curves in the nostrils. The broad, stable forehead overshadows pale, bright eyes that gleam with a baffled, imaginative wistfulness. The finely-moulded lips are not set quite hard by life: they keep a wayward quiver in their strength. The round, soft chin modulates the trenchant profile with a romantic concession to illusion, which is promptly revoked by the matter-of-fact hedge of grey side-whisker. The shining, smooth surfaces of placid skin suggest a great, comfortable content, a genial relish for rounded life, a pillowed philosophy.

The deep, mellow voice has no fevered incertitude in its booming cadences. It has notes that faintly recall Dr. Parker's far-darting syllables. There is a strange remoteness in its vibrations, as if the man and the voice were two, not one. This impression is heightened by the absent-minded reverie of the pale, bright

eyes, out of which seems to gaze another personality quite different from the personality in the level voice that reads the sermon. And at times one has a glimpse of a third personality in the strange, irrelevant smile that flits over the unconscious face, as a cloud-shadow passes over a rock.

"I the Lord change not." The Preacher boldly tells us what God is and what Man is. He knows. God cannot change. His intellectual being is as unchangeable as His moral being. Therefore, miracles are impossible. A miracle would be a violation by God of one of His own main ideas. God is rest. We are not. We act against the physical and moral ideas of the universe, and they act against us. We grow weary. We want rest, and rest can only be attained when we act in harmony with the Will of the Universe. The Preacher develops this idea very eloquently. He paints a mournful picture of human folly. His voice rises and falls sadly and dolefully as he chants a prose echo of Matthew Arnold's melancholy moan. The Order of Things becomes a vast, grim, paternal spectre, more terrible than Fate or Destiny or Chance or Circumstance. We crouch and cower as the Will of the Universe spreads itself over the sky. Conscious of Order we rebel against it. Nature is pitiless. She marches on her way, hurling us aside wounded and broken, at every blow saying silently, "Get into line with me. Harmonize your will with my will." Subdue your will! The whole mass of pain, misery, and evil with which death is attended arises simply out of man determining to indulge his will in opposition to the Will of the Universe. That, says the Preacher, is the last generalization. Is it? I wonder.

The dolorous plainsong glides on. Our moral weariness is greater than our physical weariness. We hurl

ourselves against the Will of the Moral Universe, against the Inexorability of Righteousness. God is Order. Everything else is subordinate. If we choose to do our own will, we choose also peacelessness. This is the result of uncajolable law. Rest comes of law obeyed. The laws of the physical, moral, and spiritual worlds are identical. The spiritual world is that in which God and His creatures are eternally related as Father and Child. God's absolute self-forgetfulness in our life demands our absolute self-forgetfulness in His. To spring off one's own shadow is the fundamental law of spiritual being. Many are our woes. One is their remedy. Harmonize your life. Be nothing but love to nature, to man, to God. This is a lofty, ethical creed, so lofty, indeed, that in it the white glare of perpetual snow blinds, the rarefied air chokes, the chill wind benumbs. Yes, Unitarianism is a lofty loneliness, and the pale, bright eyes of the great Unitarian Preacher still haunt me—solitary, wistful, visionary, and eagerly sad.

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